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ABSTRACT

A study focused on the problems of poor performance in classroom assignments and state-wide writing assessments of middle grade students in the practicum setting. The goals of the practicum plan were: (1) to improve teacher competency in the steps of the writing process; (2) to improve student attitudes about writing; and (3) to improve writing abilities and achievement of students by enhanced teaching practices and encouraging publishing for various audiences. Accomplishment of these goals was pursued through a series of staff development activities for teachers and subsequent implementation of classroom writing using the steps of the writing process and holistic scoring exercises as evaluation. Subjects, 142 students in a rural North Carolina school, completed both pre-implementation and post-implementation surveys; more than the projected 25% improved their attitude toward writing. Results indicated that the process writing approach improved the students' performances in composition. This improvement is expected to be perpetuated in all subjects across the curriculum as well as in annual writing assessments in future years. (Seven tables of data are included; 34 references and 13 appendixes are attached.) (RAE)

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Improving Writing Abilities of Middle Grade Students

by

Ann Pharr Elks

Cluster XXI

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A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

Improving Writing Abilities and Achievement of Middle School Students Through Instruction in the Writing Process.
Elks, Ann Pharr, 1988: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood.
Descriptors: Elementary Education/Composition Skills/Holistic Evaluation/Remediation and Improvement of Writing Deficiencies/ Middle School Writing/Prewriting Strategies/Process Writing/ Teaching Methods/Writing Assessment/Written Expression/ Writing Improvement/Writing Instruction/Writing Processes/ Writing Skills.

This practicum focused on the problems of poor performance in classroom assignments and state-wide writing assessments by middle grade students in the practicum setting. The goals of the practicum plan were: (a) to improve teacher competency in the steps of the writing process; (b) to improve student attitudes about writing; and (c) to improve writing abilities and achievement of students by enhanced teaching practices and encouraging publishing for various audiences.

Accomplishment of these goals was pursued through a series of staff development activities for teachers and subsequent implementation of classroom writing using the steps of the writing process and holistic scoring exercises as evaluation. Results indicated that the process writing approach improved the students' performances in composition. This improvement is expected to be perpetuated in all subjects across the curriculum as well as annual writing assessments in future years.

Of the 142 students who completed both pre-implementation and post-implementation surveys, more than the projected 25% of the students improved their attitude toward writing. This gain was measured by a survey designed by the writer with various questions about the importance and difficulty of the writing process. Based on the summary report of the state-wide annual writing assessment, a gain of 16.8% was made in the number of students scoring at 2.5 (holistically) and higher. The 1986-87 percentage was 13.1% and the 1987-88 percentage was 39.9%. This gain includes educationally handicapped students. These students improved their ability to clearly state a main idea, support it with details and elaboration, thus demonstrating ability to compose according to the holistic model.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The school in which this practicum took place is a rural area in southeastern North Carolina. Although large in size, the population is only 30,000 spread over an area of 879 square miles, calculating to an average of 30 persons per square mile. The area is lacking in many resources found in urban centers and their environs. Students, teachers, and parents from this rural setting lack exposure and experiences known to more diverse urban dwellers. Without an industrial tax base, the schools lack the strong financial foundation of a flourishing economic system based on large scale industries and a strong labor force with incremental income.

Socio-economic status of the school population is low. The area within the district has a low per capita income. Based on the 1980 census, county per capita income was $4,730 compared to the state average of $6,900 and the national average of $9,511. These statistics from the N. C. Department of Commerce rank the area 90 in a field of 100 counties in the state (see Appendix A). Characterized as 100% rural with no cities, rather than a multiplicity of cultures, there exists nearly a common culture that is differentiated more by race than any other distinguishing feature. The racial majority is Caucasian. Racial composition is 60% white, 39% black, and 1% Native

American. The three races have distinctly different heritage. However, the three have co-existed harmoniously in schools since the integration of schools was imposed by the courts in the 1960s, while remaining segregated in churches and neighborhoods.

Another significant aspect of the practicum setting is that the area has historically been economically self-sufficient. A brief economic history survey back to the colonial era reveals the production of naval stores was the economic mainstay. From the vast pine forests of the area, naval stores and lumber were the economic base. These products and services provided jobs for the area populace. The strategic location of a river through the area made for profitable importation; small ships could navigate the river to be loaded along the way with these and other marketable products, then return to and traverse the Atlantic to the shipbuilding empires of Europe.

Changing times led to a changing economy. As the naval stores industry declined, cotton became king during the pre-Civil War years when slave labor was abundant. Then, in the 19th century, cotton gave way to peanuts. With the advent of the 1980s, the economic situation changed again. Recently the agricultural economy became severely depressed, and many farms that had been in the possession of a family for generations were sold due to non-productivity and thus were no longer the economic livelihood of the community.

A different basis of economics is gradually emerging: low-skilled industry. Based on the latest census, 80% of the 12,000 labor force

was categorized as low-skilled. Per capita income within the boundaries of the school district has not risen significantly and is still well below the state average.

As this brief economic history reveals, the means of making a living have changed over the years, but the life style has remained basically the same. Changes have occurred through a slow and revolutionary process rather than by choices based on decisions.

The community is respectful of tradition, reveres history, and is dubious about change. Several attempts of industry have been thwarted by this anxiety about something new in the community. The small town that is the county seat of government had the same elected mayor for twenty-five years. The county was served by the same sheriff for thirty years. Most of the school and community leaders are natives who have risen through the system. They have gained the long-term respect and trust of their constituents by earning them through years of dedicated service.

Strong and stable community leadership has helped solidify family traditions and keep mores intact. In spite of the economic transition outlined above, the population has remained stable. Family structures are still strong with extended families prevalent. There is a low incidence of single families compared to other areas of the state and nation. Closely knit families with much overlapping of relationships are typical. An atmosphere of the renowned southern hospitality prevails.

The Writer's Work Setting and Role

The total school population is 6,100 of which 3,100 are categorized as economically or educationally deprived based on federal criteria. Because of this high rate of deprivation, the percentage who qualify for free lunches and compensatory educational programs is approximately 50%. The next highest category would be lower middle class with a very low percentage considered high income based on the 1980 census indicating median home value to be $26,422, and average household income $10,952 (see Appendix B).

The schools in this district are part of the state public education system with local decisions controlled by an elected five-member Board of Education. This Board establishes policy and monitors decisions for the educational system with implementation responsibility designated to the appointed and contracted administrators and teachers of the local school administrative unit.

The administrative hierarchy consists of one Superintendent, one Associate Superintendent (Curriculum and Personnel), one Assistant Superintendent (Federal Programs), and a secondary administrative layer of program directors, administrators, coordinators, and supervisors (see Appendix C). These administrators serve 400 teachers and principals who in turn provide educational services to the 6,100 student population with a teacher:student ratio ranging from 1:23 to 1:29. Various grouping and organizational patterns are in place according to the determination of administrators and teachers as to the best way to meet the needs of their students. Exceptional children

within the population are served on a consultative basis, resource settings, and a few in self-contained classes. Other special programs serve children with speech problems, reading deficiencies, or any other handicapping condition. Continuous screening identifies the children eligible for the programs.

The practicum writer was a student of this school system. A native of the county, the writer's public school experience took place in the practicum setting. Deeply rooted loyalties to the administrators, teachers, and the community intensify the search for an effective solution to the practicum problem. Fifteen years as a teacher of various levels: early childhood, middle school, and junior high school with varied campus and county-wide responsibilities gave the writer a perceptive insight into the nature and function of the schools. The writer's current position as Middle School Supervisor and Director of Staff Development provided the coordination base needed to direct and implement the changes necessary in the curriculum in order to address the problem identified in the practicum process.

The school system has certain strengths and weaknesses because of the demographics discussed above. The continuation of traditional mores is perceived by most as a strength. Several patriarchs interviewed for the purpose of this paper preferred the pastoral setting for their families because of the benefits of lack of exposure to some negative aspects of society rampant in more culturally diverse and mobile communities. Many families

perceive the rural environment as advantageous to their maintenance of a life style somewhat sheltered from publicized urban problems of drugs, teen cliques, and high crime rates. Most of the families interviewed, as well as the writer, value the strong ties to tradition and heritage. Problem solutions that yield improvement yet cause little disruption are expected to be more acceptable than radical or abrupt change.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Description of the Problem Situation

One inherent weakness of the conventional community described in the narrative above is fluency of expression. Students are not exposed to diverse and expressive verbal models in the practicum setting. This manifests itself in both oral and written communication. Area school children are less able to speak with expressiveness, write with smoothness and ease, and communicate via a rich vocabulary. Students of the local school system do not perform as well as peers in the skills of written expression.

A result of this deficiency was that students of local schools fell below the state average in the skills of holistic composition. Students without the ability to express themselves in writing were handicapped in applying to institutions of higher education as well as in the world outside the school setting. More resources and more time were needed to develop the skills of writing.

Another result of inadequate written expression carried over into other subjects of the curriculum. The students who could not write a coherent paragraph or well-organized essay would be functioning without necessary skills in a science or history class. Writing was found to be basic to all academic areas and in the social and economic world outside the school. Therefore, it was deemed

essential that writing be developed, refined, and evaluated in the public schools.

Another manifestation of this weakness in written expression was in attitude toward writing. A poor attitude had evolved through unsuccessful experiences. When a student was not successful in a learning effort, that activity seemed less attractive and enjoyable than one that provided success. As writing improved, grades and scores were expected to improve; consequently, attitudes toward writing would improve, thus leading to more success.

A complication of the practicum problem was suspected to be that teachers may not have been adequately prepared as teachers of writing at the middle school level. As insecure writers themselves, this attitude may have been subtly conveyed to students. More time and emphasis on the techniques to improve writing skills was expected to help remediate this negative frame of mind affecting motivation and teacher behavior.

In addition to the lack of in-depth training in the teaching of holistic composition, teachers of subjects other than language arts believed that teaching writing was the responsibility of the English Department alone. According to a challenge from the Associate Superintendent for Curriculum who is the Chief Education Officer in the school system, every teacher is a teacher of writing and a teacher of reading. Because of the reciprocal nature of the communication skills and their integration into every discipline, every teacher

in the school system was charged the responsibility of becoming a teacher of writing. Every teacher in the school system was asked to join in a concerted effort to improve the abilities of students by improving teacher skills and pedagogy.

In discussions with colleagues, it was often mentioned that the composition skills were previously introduced only at the junior high level and refined at the secondary level. The content of the curriculum has trickled down resulting in concepts being taught earlier. Most teachers did not recall formal composition being introduced at middle school. They recalled fluency of expression in middle school and less emphasis on composition structure in previous years and during their teacher training experience.

The problem addressed was middle school students' inability to write competently according to the focused holistic scoring model. A solution was implemented to enable these students to learn and practice good writing techniques. Because of the discrepancy that existed in the practicum setting between what writing should be and what was being produced by students, a plan was initiated to improve writing competencies of middle school students, according to the holistic model via process writing. Implementation of the plan was to provide a solution to the problem of middle school students' inability to write according to the design of the holistic model.

Documentation of the Problem

Documentation supporting the existence of the problem outlined above was available in results of state-wide testing. The North

Carolina Writing Assessment is administered annually to students at certain grade levels. The writing assessment is designed to measure ability to express ideas in writing clearly and concisely. It is also intended to gauge the students' command of grammar, spelling, as well as conventions of punctuation and capitalization. The assessment is given yearly to children in grade six across the state. It is scored on a scale from one (1) to four (4) with four being the optimum score. The scoring procedures are based on the following criteria:

4. The writing exhibits a strong command of the elements of good composition. Facility is demonstrated in all characteristics of holistic writing (main idea, supportive detail, organization, coherence).

3. The essay shows a reasonable command of clear and concise writing.

2. The paper has focus and may attempt to establish reasons or details but not sufficiently to make the reader understand the command of the characteristics of holistic writing.

1. The writer shows evidence of attempting to respond to the given prompt but meaning is not clear.

The standard of 2.5 is accepted locally as a minimally satisfactory score. Lower scores make remediation necessary.

Local sixth graders did not score within an acceptable range. Compared to their peers state-wide where 28.5% scored at 2.5 or higher, local students scoring 2.5 or above was only 22.9% according to the

annual testing program summary report (see Appendix D). The discrepancy of 5.6% between local and state scores warranted investigation to determine the cause of the deficit and begin remediation.

The ultimate strength of this school system was cited as dedicated teachers who strive to help students attain their potential by overcoming deficiencies. Another strength was the community support of school programs. School faculties were anxious about the test results, and were eager to learn ways of improving the writing abilities of their students. Although material resources were limited, parental and community support was unstinted, teachers committed, and administrators challenged to find pertinent and innovative ways to meet student needs.

Interviews with students now enrolled in colleges, and their parents, further supported the existence of a writing problem. The writer questioned several students to ascertain how their writing skills compared to their peers at the various colleges and universities. These were informal and conversational interviews carried on over an extended period of several months. The most prevalent response was that they were expected to be able to write when they entered college. Many of these students indicated that composition was their most difficult task and affected nearly all areas of their college programs because term papers and essay assignments were common in almost every class.

Further demonstration of the writing problem was provided by volumes of samples of writing collected from across the school district. Evaluators determined that students were not competent in composing paragraphs clearly and effectively. Examination of student writing samples proved that present instructional practices were not effective in helping students master the skills and production of well-written compositions according to the holistic model.

The results of an opinion survey about writing provided another description of the writing problem. According to the results as summarized in Chapter V, a great number of students disliked writing, perceiving it as important but difficult. The results of this survey indicated that students felt they needed writing ability in order to succeed in other subjects and make better grades, and felt incompetent at their present skill level. Recognition of the essential nature of writing skills among students was considered a positive factor in initiating motivation to improve.

Causative Analysis

In an analysis of the causes, the following were considered most probable. Lack of time devoted to teaching of writing over time was cited as one reason for poor writing among students. Both teachers and students tended to attempt to "quick fix" writing with a concentrated effort just prior to annual assessment time. The existing literature emphasized that writing must be systematic throughout the year and across the curriculum in order to equip students with the competencies and confidence they need to write well.

Another cause was the methodology presently employed in the teaching of writing. Observation and school visitations indicated the primary modes of instruction in the middle school classroom were oral/aural with teacher direction. A tour of classrooms engaged in writing at the middle school level revealed teachers prompting with students passively writing based on an assignment dictated by the teachers. There was little student exchange or student evaluation of writing efforts. Little variety was observed with learning modalities taken into consideration to adjust to individual learning styles. The literature consistently decries this passive methodology; yet, it was found to be in practice.

Another significant cause of the discrepancy in writing abilities is lack of commitment on the part of subject area teachers outside the language arts. Many teachers of science, history, and health evade the responsibility of teaching writing because of the demands of their discipline. Teachers of other subjects convey the responsibility to teach writing to the teacher of communication skills exclusively.

Until recently, students and teachers were not apprised of the importance of writing. The areas of basic skills as measured by annual objective testing programs, such as California Achievement Test (CAT) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) were the thrust of efforts to improve educational achievement in prior years. These standardized tests were used to measure growth in student learning and accomplishment of teaching objectives and goals. Writing received little emphasis and was not reported as a part of achievement testing. Studies conducted

by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (1984) documented low student performance in written communication. This information has heightened demand for attention to increasing student writing achievement.

Another cause of the problem of inadequate writing is due to time demands faced by all teachers. The present expansion of programs at the middle school level: cultural arts, physical education, second language, and a forthcoming pre-vocational course program cause the teacher to feel overwhelmed by the content he or she is expected to cover to assure mastery by students. Some educators view a writing program as an added dimension to an already overloaded curriculum and overburdened teaching load. Unless writing is integrated into other curriculum areas, more instructional time will be required. More stringent state and local requirements regarding time-on-task demand that teachers carefully guard and efficiently use every minute of the school day.

Related Literature Review

It was widely supported through the literature that students are being taught separate skills but are unable to use them because they lack practice in actual purposeful writing situations (Britton, 1980; Elbow, 1973; Emig, 1975; Moffet & Wagner, 1976). It is purported by the writer and administrators within the local school system that students learn to write by writing. There is research evidence available that will remediate these deficiencies (Turnbill, 1984; Weiner, 1984).

The methods to bring about this change in behavioral competency needed to be explored and implemented. The cost to society of implementing strategies to remediate writing inadequacies would be small in comparison to the price of failure to solve the problem by allowing illiteracy to perpetuate. This prospect further emphasized a need for attention to increasing student writing achievement. Writing as both a means and an end to learning undergirds the ability to write as essential in school. Writing opportunities presented a method of response that required higher order thinking, thus surpassing other response modes.

Rationale and support for continuous writing was reported in the work of Bromley (1985). Writing practice twice weekly over an entire semester was more effective than daily forty-five minute lessons for three weeks. The longer period and integration with relevant curriculum topics also kept students from becoming bored with writing tasks.

Langer (1986) reported the misuse of writing as just a way to determine what students have learned about a particular subject with little emphasis on writing skills or the use of writing for more thoughtful purposes. Langer found in investigations comparing three common study tasks: short answer questions, note taking, and writing of essays that a different kind of reasoning was used. There was a difference in the reasoning and thinking each activity involved and a difference in knowledge gained. The gain was highest for essay writing,

next highest for note taking, and study questions rendered the least gain. The results of Langer suggest that writing would create the highest retention situation as well as aid the learner more in organizing knowledge.

Writing is creating for academic purposes concluded Clay (1986). In order for the learner to respond in writing or art, he must relate, remember, relearn, monitor, problem-solve, along with other mental activities that help him create solutions. Clay referred to these as constructive processes. The solutions are built by drawing on the immediate stimuli but affected by a multitude of prior learning experiences. Clay further declared that certain activities do not fit the constructive mode. These were repetitive tasks, short answer question exercises, filling in the blanks, or writing unrelated sentences. In order for a student to develop constructive processes, he must be given opportunities to construct his own responses and organize them into a meaningful whole as much as one-half or 50% of the time (Clay, 1986).

A general conclusion that was drawn from the research cited above is that writing instruction is essential and writing surpasses other methods of response in learning experiences. Writing has been shown to yield a higher retention rate and a higher recall rate. Creation of a written response was found to require a higher level and more complex thinking and reasoning than rote learning or short answer

format questions. The writer must use a selection, evaluation, and elimination process; thus evoking a higher level thinking skill to restructure new information via his own language processes.

More evidence existed in the work of Biggs and Rihn (1984). These researchers recommended writing as a way to develop students' metacognitive abilities. Writing requires marshaling thoughts, integrating them into a context of prior knowledge, sequencing and organizing them into a new schema. The writer is required to work through a selection process and restructure a new whole. According to these studies (Biggs & Rihn, 1984), students who have written on a subject will remember for a longer time because a deeper kind of knowledge process is required.

Bromley (1985) advocated précis writing as a method of improving main idea conceptualization that would enhance both reading comprehension and writing abilities. Précis writing involved stating the main idea of a selection in one sentence or two. This exercise required a thinking process of the highest order--synthesizing a large body of information into one thesis sentence.

PORPE was a writing strategy for studying and learning in the content areas proposed by Simpson (1986). Predict, Organize, Rehearse, Practice, and Evaluate are the five steps in the PORPE writing approach. Prediction involved selection and elimination of ideas based on a judgment of what was most important. Organization of these key concepts led to rehearsing an answer or mapping a correct route either

aloud or by use of marginal outline notes. Practice was the actual attempt to answer with a break from the material recommended before the evaluation process began. Use of a checklist or referral to original material was recommended as a necessary part of evaluation. The PORPE strategy can be applied to any content area.

Myriad specific suggestions for the development of writing skills which could easily be implemented in the middle school classroom were discovered in the writer's review of the literature.

Petty and Bowen (1976) found a solution to dealing with finding time to teach writing. They suggested combining or integrating writing projects, for example, with social studies, assigning an adventure story in the land of focus, a pioneer's diary, a description of how a blacksmith made a tool. This approach was recommended for any subject. Petty and Bowen also suggested diagnostic testing to determine what might be omitted with particular groups, thus individualizing according to need. They heralded this as a way to save time and focus on need and interest via writing while enhancing the prerequisite language arts skills. Other researchers (Shepherd & Tomkins, 1986) challenged every teacher to assume responsibility for teaching composition by using writing to communicate more effectively in the content areas.

Failure to break the writing task down into smaller component parts was cited by Iles (1987) as a major weakness in our approach to writing. Iles' illustrative comparison was to the

"Salami Solution." We try to eat the entire salami rather than slicing the task into "bite size" pieces that we can accomplish one at a time. A sequence of steps: secure information, plan, draft an outline, revise as we proofread, and begin to produce a final draft, to lead to a polished and professional written work is a strong recommendation by Iles (1987).

Another technique proposed in the literature (Graves, 1983) was to expand, clarify, and structure writing in the personal conference. This researcher reported that teachers can discover the elements of writing, specific difficulties, and give skill instruction tailored to the individual as they teach by application. Conferencing should ideally lead to the workshop approach to writing with peer conferencing and record-keeping with writing logs recommended as a means for teachers and students to see evidence of progress.

Hillerich (1985) believed that the difficulty of evaluating writing might cause teachers to assign fewer essays and more short answer type questions. He further referred to confusion on the part of the evaluator between the message and the mechanics, or the content and conventions. A suggestion to lighten the paper grading was use of peer evaluation, shorter papers, and self-evaluation. These techniques were suggested to change the passive teacher-dominated focus of writing instruction. Active and critical reading of peers' compositions was expected to bring a higher level response to the task than receiving teacher marks and comments.

Wheeler (1979) addressed a crisis in writing in education in America. He attributed the disintegration to television and lack of encouragement of self-expression. Wheeler documented that large numbers of entering college students were unable to write clearly and coherently as freshmen. For example, at the University of California, nearly one-half of the students in the top 12.5% of high school graduating classes displayed such inadequacies in writing that they were required to take remedial courses. At the University of Michigan and the University of Georgia, and other schools, remedial writing replaced one semester of freshman English, according to Wheeler. At the City University of New York where Wheeler is a teacher, he described the writing of freshmen as awkward, disorganized, and incoherent. Wheeler further attested in his book, The Great American Writing Block, that the writing crisis was becoming worse.

Some researchers (Graves & Stuart, 1985) blamed public schools for the writing dilemma. Graves and Stuart criticized school methods by saying that children are fortunately not taught to talk by the same methods used in schools to teach writing. These writers believe that if they were, we would probably have more speech disabilities and problems. These authors criticized the use of mimeographed skills' worksheets designed to prepare a child for writing. The way we teach writing in many schools was compared to an assembly line and the researchers questioned if human mental processes actually work in that piecemeal way.

Graves (1983) further attacked the component method of teaching writing by projecting a theory that it denied the learner the opportunity to practice the use of thinking skills, such as organizing, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating information. Using fill-in blanks and worksheet-type reading and writing exercises causes children to expect simple one-step and clear-cut right and wrong answers. Major issues require discussion, debate, and mediation, and being more complex, demand a higher level of skill than a simple one-step solution. Both Graves and Stuart, therefore, recommended the teaching of writing via the process approach. They advocated the step-by-step process of brainstorming, pre-writing, drafting, editing, and rewriting to produce a quality piece of written work.

Donald Graves (1983) showed classroom implications for research by reporting numerous strategies for the effective teaching of writing. Graves challenged teachers to become writers, practioners in their fields. Graves said a teacher of music must be able to read and produce music and a writing teacher must be able to write. He called writing and the teaching of writing twin crafts. They are inseparable because the teacher who has not written cannot teach the writer's craft. Graves recommended a specific sequence of steps:

1. Set the tone by writing with the students.

2. Select topic choice by listing several and narrowing down to two and then one.

3. Monitor student writing and receiving the ideas of the students.

4. Time to share:

(a) Discuss some of the topics

(b) Share some of the struggles

(c) Invite a writer to read his/her best line

5. Publishing which will include binding, reading aloud, or posting in a sharing place.

Graves (1980) expounded on the idea of publishing by reinforcing the idea that writing transcends the individual in communication. The publishing for another contributes to the sense of audience. The published product is available for assessment of growth and helps communicate to the home some of the learning activities of the school.

According to the work of Graves (1983), teacher modeling changes the relationship within a class. Teacher and students become partners in learning with problems to solve. Writing becomes a process of sharing and the classroom becomes a community of helping each other. Various techniques and types of equipment can be used by the teacher and students for modeling: overhead projectors, easel with chart paper, chalkboard, and actually writing with the children in pencil and paper compositions. Graves further recommended that the children be surrounded with literature as models for inspiration, for critique, and to help remove the mystique of authorship as well as experience its joy.

As this brief review of the literature disclosed, numerous examples of writing weaknesses of middle school students exist with myriad solutions. There was no lack of evidence to substantiate the existence of a problem on a broad spectrum.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Statement of General Goals

The general goals of this practicum were based on the premise that writing ability is essential for students to be able to function effectively in higher education or in the world of work. Therefore, the goals encompass basic skills which are necessary for a successful life.

The major goal of the practicum was to improve instructional competency as a necessary prerequisite to the improvement of writing at the middle school level. Concentrated instruction was expected to lead to more positive attitudes and greater achievement, thus perpetuating success.

Behavioral Expectations

Behavioral expectations projected for this practicum were:

1. Teachers would participate in staff development sessions conducted by writing consultants and acquire new knowledge about process writing as determined by samples produced and critiques conducted of students' works.

2. One-fourth (25%) of the middle school students in the practicum target group would show measurably improved attitudes about writing as determined by attitude and incentive surveys given over two grading periods of instruction.

3. Student writing ability would improve with 40% of students scoring 2.5, or higher, as evaluated by a committee of readers using the holistic scoring model.

Evaluation Instruments

The following instruments and techniques were used to collect information for evaluation of accomplishment of each objective.

The first objective of teacher competency was ascertained by perusal of essays developed anonymously by teachers as a workshop activity. Attendance was required of the target groups and participation was expected. Class rolls were circulated at each session and individual participant evaluations completed and collected by a facilitator. An additional measure of appraisal was a summary of the evaluations of each teacher participant to determine the degree of success according to his/her perception. Both of these devices were written documents tabulated and summarized later in this report (see Appendix E).

The individual participant evaluation was a sixteen-item form based on practices identified in Effective Schools: A Summary of Research (1983). A five-scale evaluation form (spaces for strongly agree; agree; undecided; disagree; and strongly disagree) for participants to register the degree of their assent or disagreement of the staff development activity was distributed at the workshops. Each teacher responded, and total results were tallied and recorded after these sessions (see Appendix F).

The second objective of improved attitudes toward writing was measured by an attitude survey designed by the writer (see Appendix G) and referred to perceptions about writing. It was anticipated improved achievement would cause higher ratings as a result of success

thus perpetuating more success and improved attitudes. Teachers administered the first survey immediately after the first staff development training and before formal instruction began in the stages of the writing process as advocated by the practicum design. The post-implementation opinionnaire was administered after the full period of teacher training and classroom execution.

Over the period of implementation, middle school students were expected to show better attitudes about writing. This growth was to be reported from data collected by the attitude survey given before the plan was put into effect and again at the conclusion. The achievement standard was projected that 25% of the students would show measurable increase toward the positive side of the attitude scale. An increase was anticipated as a result of the practicum effort.

The final objective of the practicum was measured by the standards of focused holistic scoring. This is a general impression technique with focus on specific criteria. According to Hillerich (1985), most educators see holistic evaluation as the most valid; that is, holistic measurement actually measures what it is supposed to measure--the total ability to communicate in writing.

Teachers were oriented to the holistic scoring model. Pre-test writing samples were collected during the first grading period. These pre-test samples were evaluated by teachers prior to beginning the teacher inservice. During the first two grading periods, implementation took place in classrooms with students. The expectation was that 40%

of these students would score 2.5, or higher, on essays scored holistically by a committee of trained teacher-readers.

Holistic evaluation was engaged for the purpose of reporting, diagnosing, and evaluating. Specific growth in percentage points of improvement was tabulated each time samples were collected. Diagnosis and discussion among communication skills coordinators, other consultants, and the writer determined the course of the next inservice, as well as changes and direction of subsequent classroom instruction.

The final and ultimate evaluation would come in the form of the state-wide annual testing program writing assessment summary report. This report is a print-out of state and regional averages compared to the overall school system averages and then shows a breakdown among schools within the system being reported. This report becomes public information and is released to all schools and to local newspapers along with comparisons of neighboring school districts. It was the report of the last school year (1986-87) that prompted the writer to the seriousness of the writing problem.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion of Solutions

A number of different approaches to the problem of inadequate writing ability was discovered in a review of the literature. Some of these methods were adapted and used within the practicum setting. Some of the various strategies were implemented to improve and enrich writing experiences and the teaching of writing. These were eclectically presented for consideration of the teachers involved in a series of staff development activities. The variety of approaches aided the teachers to select more appropriately for their students and coordinate a shared effort to improve writing skills on a school-wide basis via instruction in the writing process.

One successful approach used was described by Donald Graves (1983). Graves has written extensively in the field and researched with a team of associates from whom conclusions were reported to the National Institute of Education. One major recommendation was that the teaching of writing should be a reciprocal process. Graves' major theme emphasized the difference in the writing act that exists for every child. His contention, as a result of findings in the study, was that a reciprocal and responsive type teaching is best in the writing process. Individual differences are exemplified in the fact that one child might make several revisions while another would think through his organization and require a minimum number.

The value of the conference approach to writing was undisputed in the literature review. The conference was repeatedly advocated as a way to expand, clarify, and structure thought processes. The teacher was put into a position to observe specific individual difficulties and give skills instruction tailored to the individual and teach through application. Conferences evolve into log- and record-keeping which become a means for teachers and students to see evidence of progress.

The results of the interaction in the writing conferences in the experimental classrooms of the Graves' (1983) studies showed that the workshop atmosphere was superior. Tests and interviews showed that children in the project classrooms had improved in both writing and reading.

While the writer had little difficulty convincing the teachers within the practicum setting of the effectiveness of the conference approach, local emphasis was presently being placed on a structured and sequenced model of instruction. A model six-point lesson plan adapted from the work of Madeline Hunter with six specific steps prescribed as being an exemplary lesson presentation is the basis for a state-wide evaluation system currently being piloted. The evaluation and resultant recommendations become criteria for advancement with hierarchal salary increases. With performance evaluations and raises based on a teacher-directed lesson plan model, local teachers were less receptive to an interactive teaching plan as the one recommended by

Graves. The resolution to this pedagogical conflict was education of the evaluators to the rationale behind, and the effectiveness of, the personal conference method of teaching writing.

The evaluation instrument (see Appendix H) and process can be adapted to accommodate and encompass the writing conference technique. Several components of the lesson plan and evaluation criteria are addressed and are observable in the reciprocal method of the individual conference. Specific practices by number and description that are possible in the formative observations include the following:

1. 4 Teacher maintains high level of time-on-task.

2. 1 Administrative procedures govern student and teacher movement.

2. 4 Monitoring of student performance.

3. 4 Maintenance of understandable language.

3. 9 Smooth and efficient transition between tasks.

3.10 Clarification of assigned tasks.

4. 2 Teacher circulation to check performance.

5. 1 Feedback on correctness of work in order to encourage student growth.

Some teachers in the system resisted the focused holistic scoring procedure. They saw a problem inherent in this organized and structured approach. Such restrictive and specific criteria seemed to stifle creativity in writing. Some teachers felt that students should be encouraged to express themselves with imagination and more creativity rather than through such an organized approach. They considered organization another way to deliver an artistic and creative narrative.

Graves (1983) confronted the question of conflict between creativity and structure by describing the creative process of the famous poet, Maxine Kumin. Kumin recounted a process of insights being furiously written down without regard for convention or style until some structure began organically to work. She then went through a series of drafts and began to refine her wording. Punctuation was the final focus for this artistic writer. Through a similar process, Graves suggested a balance between rigor and imagination.

Graves' further contention was that all writing was creative writing unless it was plagiarism because a writer brings forth words and puts them together in ways they may never have come together before. The technical writer and the poet go through the same process: an image in their minds and an elimination and selection process to accomplish envisioned goals. With this parallel, Graves reconciled the argument about creative and structured writing proponents. Both kinds of writing by students would be ideal with an understanding of when each is appropriate. Students can do creative writing, such as, short stories and free verse poetry, with no structural bounds, but factual, descriptive, appraising, persuasive, and clarifying kinds of expository writing need to follow a format that is structured and coherent.

The use of computers was another approach suggested to activate greater interest in writing. Word processors were recommended to help children write. A child with coordination problems was anticipated to be able to strike keys perhaps easier than manipulate a pencil. The ease with which corrections can be made by moving text, changing, and deleting will enable children to accept revision as a normal part of writing.

The limitations of the use of word processing as a solution was enforced by a small number of word processors available in the practicum setting. A state minimum of thirty minutes per week is barely being met in the local middle schools. Computer access is limited at this time, but as accessibility increases, so should the benefits of word processing impact on composition skills and quality of written products.

An experiment that documents the benefits of use of a computer was conducted by Pearson and Wilkinson (1986). Strategies of middle school students in writing with pen and later with a word processor were compared. The word processor was found to be a facilitating device which increased motivation to revise by making it so simple. From this study, implications were that for children with access to word processors and who are at a point of readiness to develop further in their writing, the computer may be a useful writing instrument which could catalyze progress.

Teacher modeling was considered one of the most effective ways to improve writing effort and consequently writing products (Graves, 1983). Teachers were challenged to become practitioners in their fields. Graves questioned the teacher who had not written as being unable to empathize with the writer. Graves' specific recommendations to model writing were:

1. Write with pencil and paper with students.
2. Use easel and chart paper.
3. Demonstrate with an overhead projector.

Modeling was purported by Graves to change the class relationship with teacher and student becoming partners solving problems collaboratively and the classroom environment becoming a reciprocal helping place.

Teacher writing was encouraged as a part of this practicum plan. There is evidence in the school system that writing effort was motivated in the instances where teachers engaged in the writing act with students.

A recurring problem mentioned by teachers was how to work writing instruction time into an already crowded day. One answer to this question was promulgated by Wood (1986). Key terms in an upcoming writing assignment were used as vocabulary drills. Exercise in higher order thinking skill was activated by having students develop predictive essays and compare them to the actual.

Pigford (1987) suggested using a clever and imaginative method of writing instruction. The innovative approach was found to be useful after a degree of experimentation in the classroom. This teacher of remedial writing used the sensory appeal to motivate a class of 85 students who had failed the state writing test. In an effort to make the subject matter relevant to student experience, the teacher used a "sandwich" approach. Paragragh structure was compared to a sandwich: The topic sentence was the top slice of bread, the supporting sentences were the filling, the clincher was the other slice of bread. Transition words were named various condiments. The clincher kept the contents from being exposed. The topic (thesis) sentence and the clincher could be interchanged. The sandwich (paragraph) could be turned upside down and it would still be the same in meaning in a different order. Students were instructed to select three substantial kinds of filling with vivid and clear description. Such descriptors would make the sandwich savory and interesting. Mustard, mayonnaise, and catsup would enhance the flavor or taste, as well as hold the sandwich together just as transition words hold an essay together.

Published results of the Pigford (1987) experiment showed 96% of the students passed the state writing test at the end of the year. A total of 90%, or 74 of the 85 students, scored 4.0, the highest score possible. Attitudes toward writing improved. Basic "sandwiches" advanced to "Big Macs" and "Whoppers" and writing became more enjoyable to the students and to the teacher.

Any instruction that improves reading also improves writing since the two communicative skills are interactive. A study conducted by Dunn and Graves (1986) showed another way to improve student writing by direct vocabulary instruction used as a prewriting technique.

Kroll (1977) expressed a belief that reading and writing were inseparable and writers must first develop as readers who can reconsider and edit their own writing. The Kroll study described writing and reading as processes that have nearly identical choices, errors, and skills.

De Beaugrande (1982) further asserted that the theories of reading and writing cannot be viewed in isolation from each other or from the other communicative skills. The language arts contribute to and reinforce the effectiveness of each other. One cannot be taught or learned without the other. Therefore, emphasis on vocabulary and reading improvement consequently improve children's potential as writers.

A comparison of time spent in the various language arts led Donald Graves (1980) to estimate that for every $3,000 spent to influence the student's capacity to receive information, only $1.10 was spent to influence the student's power to send it in writing. The Graves' appraisement indicates that effort is not equitably distributed. A discrepancy exists in disbursement decisions of instructional dollars. An informal survey of local expenditures seems to support the Graves' findings in the practicum setting. The output mode (writing) is essential in order for the instructor

to affirm that learning has occurred. Writing can also be shown to improve students' metacognitive and comprehension abilities (Doctorow, Wittrock, Marks, 1976). Writing, therefore, with both process and evaluative importance, can justify a greater portion of the total educational expenditure.

An interesting study of forty-two fifth graders and thirty-six sixth graders (Dunn & Graves, 1986), who were taught vocabulary terms so they achieved automaticity in recognizing them showed improved writing ability. These students were more fluent in their compositions and wrote narratives that were judged to be of higher quality. This study further reinforced the interrelationship of the language arts and illustrated another approach to improving student writing.

Results of the motivational effect of publishing were heralded by several researchers (Calkin, 1983; Graves & Stuart, 1985). According to these writers, children write and, if given a chance to share their pieces with a responsive listener, they often realize they have more to tell--and someone who hopes they will tell. Calkin found that the publishing phase in itself stimulated writing fluency and, sometimes, voluntary revisions.

Grubstein (1984) described the writing process at grade one. This information showed from beginning the process at a very early age, how quickly growth can be observed. Numerous examples were offered as proof that structure and a pattern of organization could be learned at first-grade level.

White (1985) made an impressive case for the use of holistic scoring as a method of teaching writing. He described scoring guides as respondent instruments as well as instruments of instruction. Student use of holistic scoring to rank peers' papers was proven sound pedagogically, theoretically, and practically.

Description of Selected Solution

The solution selected as a remedy to the problem of middle school students' inability to write competently was approached by a variety of methods incorporated into staff development activities. A series of staff development sessions was held to orient and train teachers in the writing process and the holistic scoring model. An eclectic approach was utilized presenting many ways the writing process could be approached. From the various strategies, teachers selected and adapted according to the needs and responses of their student groups.

Some of the ideas presented in this paper were incorporated as well as the plans of writing consultants from state and regional level education departments. Teachers practiced writing essays which were critiqued anonymously. Teachers also collected and brought student essays to the workshops to be scored by workshop participants. Collection and evaluation of writing samples from across the school district enabled teachers as evaluators to determine composition incompetencies. This technique provided both diagnostic information for students and guided practice to teachers in the use of the scoring model.

Teachers and students were encouraged to develop newsletters, journals, magazines, and other publications as a forum for writing. These publications established purposeful writing situations to incorporate all the writing sub-skills into meaningful experiences rather than isolating into fragmented skills. Editing and cooperating dyads were used as another technique in an effort to achieve the same good results as successful studies reporting use of this approach (O'Donnell, Larson, Dansereau, Rocklin, 1986).

Teachers implemented the stages of the writing process in their classrooms: brainstorming, pre-writing, editing, and revising. Writing instruction became a major thrust across the school system. Student publications were encouraged by provision of supplies, consultant services, and teacher release time with substitutes for development of the publications.

Report of Action Taken

The writer followed a sequential process of implementing the practicum proposal plan.

Step One involved presentation of data to establish clear evidence of a problem.

Step Two was the survey and conveyance of information from a literature review from which recommendations for remediation were made.

Step Three involved contacts with collegial supervisors and administrators to contract consultants and outline the plan as a point of departure.

Step Four involved orienting teachers: establishing need, setting objectives, and plotting strategies.

Step Five involved administration of a written survey to determine perceptions of writing and analysis of this data.

Step Six was the major step and involved the conducting of training sessions and subsequent classroom instruction based on the process writing model.

Step Seven involved a review of writing assessment and writing samples to evaluate the effectiveness of the methods being used.

The solution strategies selected for this plan involved 150 students of middle school. These students were from a demographic region that scores below the national norm in the language arts area on standardized tests. CAT is the survey battery administered annually across the school system.

A committee of advisors met with the writer to plan for improving the writing program. The writer made a presentation summarizing the literature and reporting on the status of writing within the school system as measured by the previous year's assessment. From this initial discussion, the need for a long-range plan with emphasis on writing instruction was recommended for the purpose of ascertaining the level of student writing ability, exploring the literature for methods, and identifying unmet needs in writing instruction. Recommendations for specific instruction options for meeting identified needs with an integrated evaluation process were built in to measure the effectiveness of the various stages of the plan.

With the help of regional subject area coordinators, the writer began to design inservice plans to train teachers in process writing. In addition to inservice, the plan had the components to allow ongoing diagnosis, monitoring, and evaluation.

The writer secured administrative approval to contract consultants. The selection of the best consultants was crucial to the success of the plan. This was assured by a survey of supervisors in surrounding school systems. The writer began an inquiry process which yielded very high recommendations for certain consultants and less enthusiastic references for others. On the advice of these attestations of high qualifications and the personal professional evaluations of the writer, consultants were contracted to aid in planning, presenting, and evaluating the process. Orientation sessions began with dissemination of diagnostic data. Primarily, the planning was based on weaknesses of students and, secondarily, on needs of teachers.

Determination of attitudes about writing was the next step. A written perception survey was administered to determine how students felt about writing in general, and specifically, in their ability to write. The purpose of the survey was to measure the students' understanding of the importance of writing ability and its relevance to success in other classes. Another purpose of the survey was to secure base line data to determine if attitudes would change with more intensive and effective writing instruction.

Teachers began concentrated writing instruction after the orientation. Writing was integrated into the social studies, science, and health curriculum. The writing stages and the process received emphasis rather than the completed essays.

Regularly scheduled planning and instructional sessions with consultants, supervisors, administrators, and teachers were held. Needs were identified, progress was evaluated, and strategies were developed. There was a high level of participation with much interaction. Teachers collected and brought in writing samples from their classes. These were examined, discussed, and critiqued. The sessions were action-oriented rather than the lecture/listen model.

School visitations were conducted by the consultants, supervisors, and practicum writer. Administrators were apprised of the plan and monitored its implementation as a part of observation and performance appraisal. During visitation, classes were observed with visitors often taking part in the writing and scoring process.

Another component of the writing improvement plan was community awareness. This involved making the school community aware of the fact that a discrepancy existed in the setting. Attention had been focused on the problem by newspaper articles comparing the system with neighboring systems and showing the comparative low rank.

Further impetus was gained during a plenary session when the Associate Superintendent for Curriculum declared the 1987-88 school year a year of writing. He further challenged every teacher of every discipline to become a teacher of writing.

The writing thrust was made known in public speaking situations related to school progress. Specific speaking engagements included civic clubs, sororities, and parent/teacher organizations.

Newspaper articles were another way the plan information was disseminated. An example of one of the articles submitted to the local paper is included in Appendix I.

Teachers were involved in comprehensive training by a Research Director where the holistic scoring process was thoroughly studied. The training of readers, procedures, and the entire scoring method was explained and simulated. Rationale for the scoring was explicated.

A pool of prompts was distributed for the teachers' use in selecting what he/she deemed to be of highest interest to their students. Teachers practiced scoring sample papers to demonstrate that they were proficient.

The second component of staff development was by two different communication skills coordinators of the State Department of Public Instruction. These occurred over a semester, some requiring teacher release time with substitute teachers and some scheduled on extended term days or after school hours. This series of workshops stressed applications of the writing process in the classroom. The stages were modeled in the workshops and practiced by the participants.

After the first workshop of the series, teachers brought student writing samples from their classrooms. These were coded and exchanged, scored, and returned. In this way, teachers were able to see the

discrepancies in their scoring and an objective for outside readers' impressions. Another method used was an overhead projector on which an essay was projected onto the screen. Each teacher critiqued and scored the essays, then compared and discussed differences--eventually reaching a consensus.

The final workshops of the series were conducted by consultants of the nationally validated program sponsored by a grant through the National Diffusion Network, Project WR.I.T.&E. This project was implemented in the target school as an effort to help raise student scores to the level of the average of the school district. The district scores were lower than the regional average.

The cause of this lower writing performance was attributed to several divergent reasons. Students in the school area are from lower socio-economic status families. The broader middle school concept of curriculum--making it more difficult to incorporate writing into the instructional day--was another reason that scores determined to be lower.

The reasons cited above, along with an administrator dedicated to finding a way to improve the skills of his students and to enhance the competencies of the faculty, were the foundation for basing the practicum at the particular target school.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The three major objectives of this practicum were accomplished.

1. Teachers participated in staff development sessions conducted by writing consultants and acquired new knowledge about process writing as determined by samples produced and critiques conducted of students' work. This objective was accomplished by a series of workshops held by State Department of Education, regional communication skills coordinators, and testing and research personnel. Additional training was presented by consultants of a National Diffusion Network Project, WR.I.T.&E., Writing Is Thorough and Efficient. This project is an exemplary writing program validated and approved for school adoption by the United States Department of Education. Project WR.I.T.&E. claims effectiveness and supports this claim by information presented in the technical brief containing evaluation results (see Appendix J).

The results of this series of staff development sessions were overwhelmingly positive, based on the participant evaluations. Individual participants scored a sixteen-item evaluation form on a five-criteria scale. Each teacher could check: (a) strongly agree; (b) agree; (c) undecided; (d) disagree; (e) strongly disagree, for each of the sixteen items. Of particular significance in these definitely positive ratings on this form, was item sixteen. On this

item, teachers were asked to rate the overall workshop as a successful training experience. The response at the "strongly agree" column was 100%; another item with 100% of the participants marking "strongly agree" was the relevance of the workshop material and content to their experiences and needs. The writer interpreted these responses as awareness that the teachers recognized an essential need for additional training, as well as the substantive importance of writing ability. A summary of responses to specific evaluations of staff development activity is shown by Table 1.

Further illustration of the positive evidence is indicated by Table 2, which is the Evaluation Summary Report. This form (SD-26) is submitted to the State Department, Division of Staff Development at the end of each workshop sponsored by the local education agency. Sponsorship is indicative of approval of the activity for units toward certificate renewal credit and determines if the hours can be sponsored by monies allocated as state staff development funds. All practicum workshops were approved and funded through staff development, and certificate renewal credits were earned by the participating teachers.

Through the staff development activities, the teachers were trained in the theory and instructional methods of process writing. They acquired the knowledge needed to teach process writing skills to the students in their classrooms.

Table 1

SD-26A

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION OF THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Instructions

Each participant in this staff development activity should evaluate the the activity by checking whether he/she Strongly Agrees, is Undecided, Disagrees, or Strongly Disagrees with each of the statements below. (The director of the activity should summarize for the group and record the results in Section H of the Evaluation Report Form SD-26.)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Materials, supplies, and equipment were ready at the beginning of the training activity.	20				
2. Participants were introduced to the specific learning objectives and materials of the workshop/ seminar.	18	2			
3. The content of the workshop reflected careful planning and organization.	20				
4. The presenter(s) (were) well prepared.	17	3			
5. The presenter(s) provided for a variety of learning styles.	20				
6. The presenter(s) modeled effective time use.	20				
7. The sessions were conducted at a brisk pace.	20				
8. The experiences of participants were utilized as a resource for learning.	20				
9. Provisions were made to actively involve participants in the learning process.	20				
10. Adequate time was allowed for participants to reflect on and relate workshop material and content to their experiences and needs.	20				
11. Questions and concerns were handled appropriately.	19	1			
12. Participants were provided with periodic feedback and encouragement.	20				
13. Visual aids and handouts were useful and understandable.	20				
14. Adequate provisions were made for participant comfort.	18	2			
15. Administrative and procedural concerns were handled smoothly and efficiently.	18	2			
16. Overall, this workshop/seminar was a successful training experience for me.	20				

SD-26

Table 2
STAFF DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION SUMMARY REPORT

Instructions

47

Each sponsor of a staff development activity of ten clock hours or more is responsible for completing this summary report form and returning it to the Division of Staff Development, State Department of Public Instruction, immediately upon completion of the activity.

A. Descriptive Title of Activity PROCESS WRITING WORKSHOP

Code (Leave Blank) _____

B. Sponsored By Board of Education

Code (Leave Blank) _____

C. Beginning and Ending Dates of Activity October 1, 1967

D. Number of Participants 20

E. Person Completing Report Ann P.Elks, Elementary Education Supervisor

Title Staff Development Coordin Address P O Box 37
Elizabethtown, N.C. 28337

F. [X] Check here if activity was utilized for certificate renewal credit.

G. Personnel providing majority of instruction were from (check only one):

___ 1. Institution of Higher Education x 2. Local Education Agencies
___ 3. State Education Agency ___ 4. Others (Specify) _____

H. Indicate the number who responded to each of the five possible ratings for each item.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	
				20	1.
			2	18	2.
				20	3.
			3	17	4.
				20	5.
				20	6.
				20	7.
				20	8.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	
				20	9.
				20	10.
			1	19	11.
				20	12.
				20	13.
			2	18	14.
			2	18	15.
				20	16.

Acquisition of increased and specific knowledge of teachers was validated by the progressively improved quality of student essays. Samples of students' work were brought in, coded by school and teacher, then exchanged by the workshop participants. Components essential to well-written holistic essays were identified in each paper. In early sessions, score points were earned and reported on the lower end of the holistic scoring continuum as sample writing was critiqued. Weaknesses cited were lack of supporting detail, inadequate elaboration, and failure to provide transition.

As the inservice sessions continued, essays were reported higher at 3.0, 3.5, and 4.0. These score points occur at the higher side of the scale.

Assessment of the many samples produced by students were graded by various teachers during the inservice series and verified measurably increased student writing competence.

Near the conclusion of the staff development series, teacher participants began to have more difficulty making suggestions about ways to improve the essays.

2. Objective two specified that 25% of the students in the practicum target group would show measurably improved attitudes about writing as determined by an attitude survey formulated by the writer.

A pre-implementation writing attitude survey was administered to the 142 students in the target group. Table 3 is a compilation of survey data collected prior to the time the plan was put into effect in the classrooms. On the four-point scale, the writer compiled the "strongly agree" and "agree" responses, the "strongly disagree" and "disagree" responses into one total each, thus recording a cumulative record of student responses as either positive or negative.

Table 4 was compiled from information gained from the identical survey administered to the same students at the conclusion of their intense training and instructional emphasis. Marked improvement in motivation and attitude had occurred, giving a strong indication that a previously unmet need had been recognized and confronted.

A comparison of the pre- and post-implementation attitudes about writing, as measured by the survey form, is shown in Table 5. Again data was compiled by the combining of "strongly agree" and "agree" responses into total positive and "strongly disagree" and "disagree" into a negative total.

Table 3

Pre-Implementation Writing Attitude survey

DIRECTIONS: Respond to the following statements by placing a check in the column that describes your feelings.

[a]N = 142

	Positive Responses			Negative Responses		
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Positive %	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Negative %
1. Writing is a difficult part of school work.	120	15	95	7	0	5
2. Writing is important in my future work.	35	80	81	20	7	19
3. I like to write.	14	18	23	50	60	77
4. It is a waste of my time to write.	2	17	13	110	13	87
5. Using the steps of writing helps to improve my paragraphs and essays.	80	23	73	32	7	27
6. My grades in other subjects would improve if my writing could improve.	27	60	61	45	10	39
7. I like to write in my free time.	5	17	15	90	30	85
8. I know how to write well.	15	10	18	55	62	82
9. If I could write well, then I would like to write more.	30	40	49	42	30	51
10. I like to write in my personal journal.	22	50	51	50	20	49

COMMENTS ABOUT WRITING:_____

_____

Note. [a]N = Total number of students responding. Percentages obtained by compiling Strongly Agree and Agree responses into the positive percentage column and compiling the Strongly Disagree and Disagree into the negative percentage column.

Table 4

Post-Practicum Writing Attitude Survey

DIRECTIONS: Respond to the following statements by placing a check in the column that describes your feelings.

[a]N = 146

	Positive Responses		%	Negative Responses		%
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Positive	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Negative
1. Writing is a difficult part of school work.	14	30	30	80	22	70
2. Writing is important in my future work.	80	26	73	20	20	27
3. I like to write.	40	88	88	8	10	12
4. It is a waste of my time to write.	0	0	0	6	140	100
5. Using the steps of writing has helped to improve my paragraphs and essays.	120	20	96	3	3	4
6. My grades in other subjects will improve as my writing improves.	22	69	62	40	15	38
7. I like to write in my free time.	30	38	47	48	30	53
8. I know how to write well.	10	100	75	20	16	25
9. Now that my writing is better, I like writing.	70	30	68	29	17	32
10. I like to write in my personal journal.	80	25	72	28	13	28

COMMENTS ABOUT WRITING:_____

_____

Note. [a]N = Total number of students responding. Percentages obtained by compiling Strongly Agree and Agree responses into the positive percentage column and compiling the Disagree and Strongly Disagree responses into the negative percentage column.

Table 5

Comparison of Pre- and Post-Implementation Percentages of Responses About Attitudes on Process Writing

1. Writing is a difficult part of school work.

	Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation	Percentage
Agree	95%	30%	+65%
Disagree	5%	70%	-65%

2. Writing is important to my future.

	Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation	Percentage
Agree	81%	73%	+8%
Disagree	19%	27%	-8%

3. I like to write.

	Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation	Percentage
Agree	23%	88%	+65%
Disagree	77%	12%	-65%

4. It is a waste of my time to write.

	Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation	Percentage
Agree	13%	0%	-13%
Disagree	87%	100%	+13%

5. Using the writing steps helps improve writing.

	Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation	Percentage
Agree	73%	96%	+23%
Disagree	27%	4%	-23%

table continues

Table 5

Comparison of Pre- and Post-Implementation Percentages of Responses About Attitudes on Process Writing

6. Writing helps improve grades in other subjects.

	Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation	Percentage
Agree	61%	62%	+1%
Disagree	39%	38%	-1%

7. I like to write in my free time.

	Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation	Percentage
Agree	15%	47%	+32%
Disagree	85%	53%	-32%

8. I know how to write well.

	Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation	Percentage
Agree	18%	75%	+57%
Disagree	82%	25%	-57%

9. I would like writing if I could write better.

	Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation	Percentage
Agree	49%	68%	+19%
Disagree	51%	32%	-19%

10. I like to write in my personal journal.

	Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation	Percentage
Agree	51%	72%	+21%
Disagree	49%	28%	-21%

The projection that 25% of the students involved in the intensified instruction would show measurable gains in positive attitudes about writing was surpassed on items 3 and 7. Item three simply stated "I like to write." The pre-implementation totals at "agree" and "strongly agree" amounted to 23%. After the concerted instructional effort outlined by the practicum, the "agree" and the "strongly agree" responses totaled 88%, thus showing an improvement of 65% in writing pleasure. Item seven addressed leisure time writing. Positive responses increased from 15% to 47%, representing an explicit gain of 65%. On several other evaluative statements measuring student attitudes, gains were near the 25% improvement projection. Writing in a personal journal (item ten) gained positively 21% from a pre-implementation 51% to 72% in the "agree" response total after implementation. Item five measured student attitudes about understanding of the writing steps relating to improving ability. The percentage of increase after the practicum program was 23%.

Table 3 shows that the number of pre-implementation attitude surveys returned was 142 and Table 4 returns totaled 146 for the post-practicum. Perusal of the data in these two tables disclosed that the 25% projection was exceeded in some and approximated in other categories.

The negative perception of writing as a difficult task measured by item one decreased from 135 to 44 students. Students who reported liking to write (item three) increased from 32 to 128, with item four measuring student attitudes about writing as a worthy use of

instructional time increased to 100% on the post-practicum survey. Both the prior survey and the survey conducted upon completion of the plan indicated that students were more acceptant of the concept that writing was a necessary and creditable skill. This is also evident in the response totals addressing writing ability as important in future work.

The number of students who felt confident about their writing ability increased from 23 to 110, as measured by the response to item eight. Attitudes before implementation showed 87 of 142, or 61%, of the students responding that writing ability affected other subject grades. The post-implementation percentage was even higher, 91 of 145, or 63%. The percentage of students reporting that the steps of writing had improved their ability was 95%.

Item seven, addressing the importance of writing, showed less change because both pre-implementation and post-implementation scores record responses undergirding students' belief in the importance of being able to write. All the students (100%) disagreed with the statement that writing was a waste of time on the pre-implementation survey. Consensus before and after the intensified writing instruction was reached in addressing writing ability affecting and improving grades in other subjects. Both measures showed a majority of the students acknowledging that they would like writing if it were less laborious for them. Finally, both groups expressed pleasure in journal writing, post-implementation being 21% greater.

The purpose of this survey was to determine if teacher training and subsequent teaching practices would change student attitudes about writing. The survey was distributed to the students whose teachers were involved in the writing improvement project. Of the 150 copies distributed, 142 pre-implementation and 146 post-implementation documents were returned to the writer.

Several of the survey statements were attempts to focus on the importance of writing. These statements consistently received a high response in the "strongly agree" column. A low percentage, 12%, viewed writing as a waste of time. A large number (135) of the students indicated that writing was a difficult part of their school work, and 120 students reported a dislike of writing as a leisure time activity. Higher ranking of personal journal writing (48%) may be indicative of more enjoyment in the absence of evaluation.

Based on the high agreement of the importance of writing to their future (76%), the students seemed to recognize the importance of a sound writing program.

Results of this survey provided the writer with clear documentation of the problem as outlined earlier. A great number of students acknowledged writing as an important, but a very difficult, segment of their school work. Results of the survey also provided the writer with insight to the students' belief that writing skill was significant to academic and career success.

Objective two, specifying that 25% of the students would show measurably improved attitudes about writing, was accomplished according to the data collected by the pre-implementation and post-implementation surveys.

3. The third behavioral expectation projected for this practicum was that student writing ability would improve with 40% of the students scoring 2.5, or higher, as evaluated by a committee of readers using the holistic scoring model.

This data was measured by a comparison of the 1986-87 test data with the 1987-88 test data (see Appendices D and K). Perusal of the data show impressive increases in the percentage of students scoring at the higher holistic score points of 4.0, 3.5, and 3.0. Growth at the target school excerpted from these summaries is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

1986-87 Holistic Scoring (HS) Results of Total School Population

HS	4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	NS
% Achieving	.6	2.9	21.1	22.2	43.9	4.7	4.7	0

1987-88 Holistic Scoring Results of Total School Population

HS	4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	NS
% Achieving	14.5	9.7	38.6	10.3	17.2	2.8	6.9	0

The total school population comparisons from 1986-87 to 1987-88 reported in Table 6 show an increase from .6 to 14.5 percent which is a net gain of 13.9 percent at the top 4.0 score. The gain at 3.5 was from 2.9 to 9.7 percent, calculating to an increase of 6.8 percent. The gain at the 3.0 score, 17.5 percent, was the greatest, from 21.9 percent to 38.6 percent. Decreases in the 2.5 score from 22.2 percent in the 1986-87 to 10.3 percent in 1987-88 indicated that 40 percent of the students scored 2.5, or above.

Expectations, as outlined by objective three, were met. The projected 40 percent of students was surpassed at 73.1 percent at the target school (indicated by (*) on the Summary Report of Annual Testing Program Writing Assessments for 1986-87 and 1987-88 (see Appendices D and K).

Results were also reported separately for the non-handicapped school population, excluding exceptional children. Table 7 reports the results of the writing assessment for the total school population minus the exceptional children's scores (see Appendices D and K). These results show even higher gains.

Table 7

1986-87 Holistic Scoring (HS) Results of Non-Handicapped Students

HS	4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	NS
% Achieving	.6	3.2	22.7	20.1	46.8	4.5	1.9	0

1987-88 Holistic Scoring Results of Non-Handicapped Students

HS	4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	NS
% Achieving	16.7	11.1	42.1	11.9	16.7	.8	.8	0

The gains reported of 16.1 percent for the 4.0 score, 7.9 percent for the 3.5, 19.4 percent for the 3.0, and 8.2 for the 2.5, totaled 81.8 percent, again surpassing the projected 40 percent gain prediction of objective three for the non-handicapped students of the target school.

Conclusions

These results support the contention that writing and the teaching of writing can be improved by intensified and systematic instruction in the writing process. The implementation of the steps of the writing process by classroom teachers with their students resulted in dramatic increases in preliminary test scores.

A planned and earnest effort by both language arts and other subject area teachers brought performance gains surpassing those projected in the practicum proposal.

Increased achievement and the instructional emphasis also caused an improvement in attitude toward writing among students in the target population. The attitude change measurement exceeded the projections in some instances.

The implications of these results can be extended. Improvement should occur in all areas of the curriculum. According to the survey, writing improvement should result in higher performance in all subjects based on the perpetuation of the success theory. Teachers with a firm new grasp on the basic pedagogy of teaching the writing process, will be able to enhance and improve individual classroom guidance.

The relationship of good writing to thinking has become more widespread in the literature (Boyer, 1983). Good writing and thinking go hand in hand. This view is also supported in the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Report (1983). In this report, American schools are urged to make clear and effective writing a major school objective. Based on this information about the reciprocity of thinking and writing, thinking skills of these students should improve also over time, resulting in better all-around student performance.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) recently reported a number of studies suggesting that American schools have spent time in achieving success at teaching students to formulate quick and short interpretations, but have been unsuccessful in helping students develop skills needed to explain and defend their judgments. According to the conclusion of these studies (NAEP, 1983), the results were shallow and superficial opinions at the expense of reasoning.

Proponents of writing-across-the-curriculum argue that writing is one of the major contexts for extending critical thinking about a particular topic (Applebee, 1977). The practicum writer cites the writing improvement as a beginning step toward higher order thinking.

From the results discussed, the conclusion of the writer is that students in the target group have increased in writing proficiency, with measurable progress having been made by both handicapped and non-handicapped students.

A further conclusion by the practicum writer is that teachers will continue to use the steps of the writing process and place strong emphasis on the importance of writing because of the success they have experienced in the practicum implementation. Teachers will also develop more positive attitudes and higher expectations in the writing of their students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to actively pursue and guide writing improvement in the practicum setting:

1. Continue the present momentum by offering inservice education for new middle school teachers and follow-up with trained faculty members to keep abreast of pedagogical publishing and trends.

2. Extend staff development downward to upper primary grades with emphasis on written expression and fluency.

3. Include writing components in all curriculum development in various disciplines in order to integrate the writing process as a part of each subject.

4. Initiate a plan of action research by identifying a task force of representative teachers to monitor progress, identify problems, and suggest changes when necessary. These task force

members would be challenged to determine if success was continuing or if changes need to be engaged.

5. Continue using publishing as a positive reinforcement for writing, thus building affirmative attitudes and developing student self-esteem.

6. Develop curriculum guides for the writing process including steps and procedures along with a variety of techniques to offer teachers eclectic decisions based on needs and interests of their groups, thus enhancing motivation.

Dissemination

The procedures and results of this practicum have been shared in a number of ways. The writer anticipates that this will continue both within the local school setting and in other settings.

One planned dissemination is the turn-key training of other teachers within the school system by the teachers who participated in the original training. The methods and information will be shared with other grade levels and subject areas not included in the initial staff development.

Another planned dissemination is the publishing of a writing curriculum guide to be shared with writing teachers and advocates of writing improvement.

Several events have already occurred that caused the results of this practicum to be diffused. The writer made a presentation to the local school board reporting the results. The Director of Testing of the school system reported the growth in writing in a

school news tabloid that is published biannually as an insert to the local newspaper (see Appendix L). The marked improvement in writing was featured in a regional publication, For Your Information, which is distributed to all school personnel in a seventeen-system region in the southeastern part of the state (see Appendix M).

The writer will submit a copy of excerpts to local professional organizations concerned with writing improvement and will be available herself for presentations to these organizations.

The practicum writer will request that this report be considered for dissemination through Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC.

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APPENDIX A

INCOME STATISTICS

NORTH CAROLINA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION
FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
IN

LABOR RESOURCES REPORT

LABOR MARKET PROFILE

ON

COUNTY

THIS IS A ** LABOR MARKET PROFILE PRESENTING AN OVERALL VIEW ON LABOR DEMAND, LABOR SUPPLY, LABOR FORCE TRENDS, EMPLOYMENT TRENDS, RECRUITABLE LABOR, AND JOB TRAINING. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON LABOR COST, LABOR REPRESENTATION AND EDUCATION CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE BY REQUEST TO THE LABOR RESOURCES SECTION AT ANY TIME. PHONE 919/733-4094. MAILING ADDRESS IS PRESENTED BELOW.

POPULATION

	1980	1970	PERCENT CHANGE 1970 TO 1980
COUNTY	30491	26477	15.2
FEMALE (%)	51.6	51.1	
MINORITY (%)	40.0	39.7	
	3551	1418	150.4

LABOR FORCE BY SEX & RACE, 1980

NOTE: 1970 CENSUS PROPORTIONS FOR SEX AND RACE APPLIED TO 1980 LABOR FORCE DATA.

	LABOR FORCE	PERCENT	EMPLOYMENT	PERCENT	UNEMPLOYMENT	RATE(%)
TOTAL	13130	100.0	11940	100.0	1190	9.1
FEMALE	5130	39.1	4410	36.9	720	14.0
MINORITY	4300	32.7	3630	30.4	670	15.6

PER CAPITA INCOME

	1980	COUNTY RANK*	1979
COUNTY	5695	88	5178
SMSA	-		-
NORTH CAROLINA	7832		7124
UNITED STATES	9511		8637

* OUT OF 100

Department of Commerce, Economic Development Group, Labor Resources Section.

APPENDIX B

MARKETING INFORMATION

DONNELLEY MARKETING INFORMATION SERVICES
A COMPANY OF THE DUN & BRADSTREET CORPORATION

FANTUS
COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

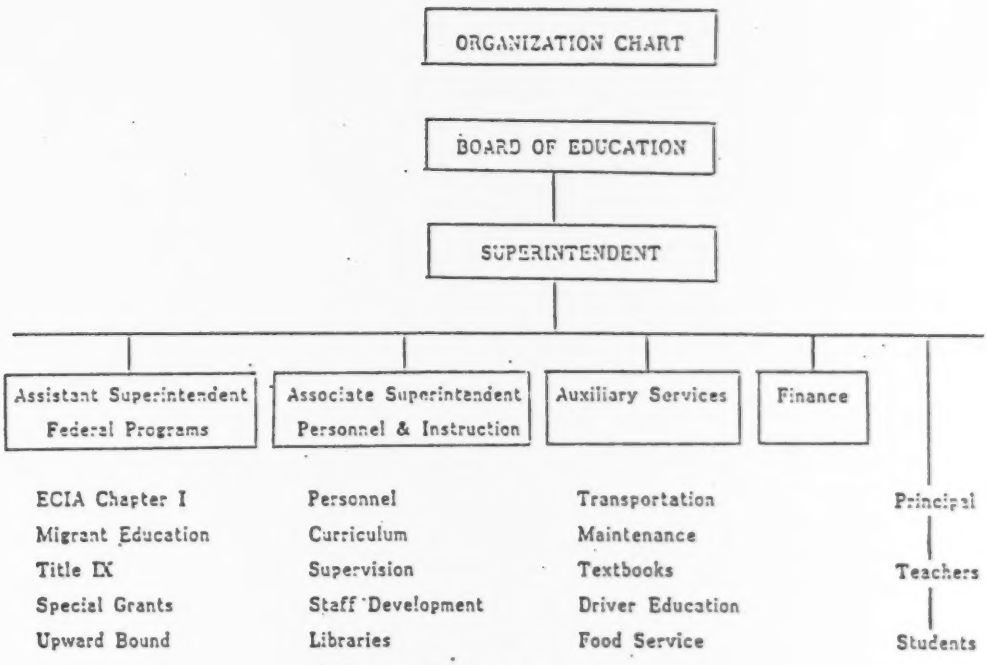
AMERICAN PROFILE 10/21/83
**** CENSUS CHANGE REPORT (2) ****

	1970 CENSUS TOTAL	1970 CENSUS PCNT	1980 CENSUS TOTAL	1980 CENSUS PCNT	PCNT CHANGE
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	7363		10113		37.3
HOUSEHOLD POPULATION	26193		30164		15.2
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE	3.56		2.98		-16.3
TOTAL FAMILIES	6421		8148		26.9
AVERAGE FAMILY SIZE	3.90		3.45		-11.5
AVERAGE FAMILY INCOME	$ 6351		$ 15174		138.9
FAMILY POPULATION	25058	94.6	28108	92.2	12.2
NONFAMILY POPULATION	1137	4.3	2056	6.7	80.8
GRP QTRS POPULATION	284	1.1	327	1.1	15.1
HOUSEHOLD INCOME:					
$ 0 - $ 7,499	4887	66.4	3659	36.0	-25.1
$ 7,500 - $ 9,999	1271	17.3	1041	10.2	-18.1
$10,000 - $14,999	887	12.0	2027	19.9	128.5
$15,000 - $24,999	253	3.4	2204	21.7	771.1
$25,000 - $34,999	45	0.6	852	8.4	1793.3
$35,000 - $49,999	14	0.2	217	2.1	1450.0
$50,000 - $74,999	6	0.1	95	0.9	1483.3
$75,000 +			79	0.8	
MEDIAN HH INCOME	$ 5272		$ 10952		107.7
AVERAGE HH INCOME	$ 5843		$ 13432		129.9
PER CAPITA INCOME	$ 1643		$ 4530		175.7
MEDIAN HOME VALUE	$ 8357		$ 26422		216.2
AVERAGE HOME VALUE	$ 10531		$ 30704		191.6
MEDIAN MONTHLY RENT	$ 51		$ 81		58.8
AVERAGE MONTHLY RENT	$ 42		$ 90		114.3
UNITS AT ADDRESS:					
1 UNIT	6735	91.5	8964	80.0	33.1
2 - 9 UNITS	123	1.7	743	6.6	504.1
10+ UNITS	6	0.1	39	0.3	550.0
MOBILE HOME	499	6.8	1460	13.0	192.6
YEAR ROUND HOUSING UNITS	8095	100.0	11206	100.0	38.4
OWNER OCCUPIED	5373	66.4	8225	73.4	53.1
RENTER OCCUPIED	1990	24.6	1888	16.8	-5.1
VACANT	732	9.0	1093	9.8	49.3

(203) 965 - 5454

APPENDIX C

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION CHART


ORGANIZATION CHART
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUPERINTENDENT
Assistant Superintendent
Federal Programs
Associate Superintendent
Personnel & Instruction
Auxiliary Services
Finance
ECIA Chapter I
Migrant Education
Title IX
Special Grants
Upward Bound
Personnel
Curriculum
Supervision
Staff Development
Libraries
Guidance and Testing
Exceptional Children
Vocational Education
Pupil Personnel
Transportation
Maintenance
Textbooks
Driver Education
Food Service
Principal
Teachers
Students

APPENDIX D

ANNUAL TESTING PROGRAM
WRITING ASSESSMENT
SUMMARY REPORT
1986-87

090 THE

SUMMARY REPORT

ANNUAL TESTING PROGRAM
WRITING ASSESSMENT
1986-87

GRADE

SCHOOL SYSTEM: SCHOOLS

RUN DATE: 01/05/87

TEST DATE: 11/86

		FOCUSED HOLISTIC SCORE POINTS								CONVENTION SCORES		
		4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	NS	++	+-	--
	NUMBER TESTED	PERCENTAGES								PERCENTAGES		
STATE												
TOTAL	83015	1.8	3.7	16.3	15.9	43.6	8.2	10.3	0.3	81.3	12.9	5.8
HANDICAPPED	6392	0.0	0.2	2.6	4.6	38.4	14.8	37.0	2.5	34.8	29.4	35.8
NON-HANDICAPPED	74203	2.0	4.0	17.5	16.9	44.0	7.6	8.0	0.1	85.4	11.4	3.1
REGION												
TOTAL	10381	2.2	3.5	15.2	15.9	43.5	8.6	10.7	0.5	77.4	15.0	7.6
HANDICAPPED	780	0.0	0.1	2.1	4.5	30.6	16.4	41.3	5.0	26.0	30.5	43.5
NON-HANDICAPPED	9433	2.4	3.8	16.4	16.9	44.4	8.0	8.1	0.1	81.6	13.7	4.7
System: **CO SCHOOLS**												
TOTAL	488	0.2	2.3	16.4	18.0	47.1	6.8	9.2	0.0	76.4	16.4	7.2
HANDICAPPED	44	0.0	0.0	4.5	18.2	31.8	13.6	31.8	0.0	56.8	22.7	20.5
NON-HANDICAPPED	444	0.2	2.5	17.6	18.0	48.6	6.1	7.0	0.0	78.4	15.8	5.9
* School A **ELEMENTARY**												
TOTAL	171	0.6	2.9	21.1	22.2	43.9	4.7	4.7	0.0	75.4	18.1	6.4
HANDICAPPED	17	0.0	0.0	5.9	41.2	17.6	5.9	29.4	0.0	76.5	17.6	5.9
NON-HANDICAPPED	154	0.6	3.2	22.7	20.1	46.8	4.5	1.9	0.0	75.3	18.2	6.5
School B												
TOTAL	72	0.0	1.4	8.3	26.4	51.4	5.6	6.9	0.0	80.6	13.9	5.6
HANDICAPPED	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	60.0	0.0	40.0	40.0	20.0
NON-HANDICAPPED	67	0.0	1.5	9.0	28.4	52.2	6.0	3.0	0.0	83.6	11.9	4.5
School C **ELEM**												
TOTAL	33	0.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	51.5	18.2	21.2	0.0	75.8	12.1	12.1
HANDICAPPED	4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	75.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	25.0	25.0
NON-HANDICAPPED	29	0.0	3.4	3.4	3.4	55.2	10.3	24.1	0.0	79.3	10.3	10.3
School D												
TOTAL	25	0.0	0.0	4.0	8.0	68.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	88.0	8.0	4.0
HANDICAPPED	2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
NON-HANDICAPPED	23	0.0	0.0	4.3	8.7	69.6	0.0	17.4	0.0	87.0	8.7	4.3
School E												
TOTAL	126	0.0	3.2	23.8	16.7	43.7	6.3	6.3	0.0	70.6	18.3	11.1
HANDICAPPED	13	0.0	0.0	7.7	7.7	46.2	7.7	30.8	0.0	30.8	23.1	46.2
NON-HANDICAPPED	113	0.0	3.5	25.7	17.7	43.4	6.2	3.5	0.0	75.2	17.7	7.1
School F												
TOTAL	61	0.0	0.0	9.8	11.5	47.5	11.5	19.7	0.0	82.0	16.4	1.6
HANDICAPPED	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3	33.3	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
NON-HANDICAPPED	58	0.0	0.0	10.3	12.1	48.3	10.3	19.0	0.0	82.8	15.5	1.7

* Target School

APPENDIX E

STAFF DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION
SUMMARY REPORT

SD-26

STAFF DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION SUMMARY REPORT

Instructions

Each sponsor of a staff development activity of ten clock hours or more is responsible for completing this summary report form and returning it to the Division of Staff Development, State Department of Public Instruction, immediately upon completion of the activity.

A. Descriptive Title of Activity _____

Code (Leave Blank) _____

B. Sponsored By _____

Code (Leave Blank) _____

C. Beginning and Ending Dates of Activity _____

D. Number of Participants _____

E. Person Completing Report _____

Title _____ Address _____

F. ☐ Check here if activity was utilized for certificate renewal credit.

G. Personnel providing majority of instruction were from (check only one):

___ 1. Institution of Higher Education ___ 2. Local Education Agencies
___ 3. State Education Agency ___ 4. Others (Specify) _____

H. Indicate the number who responded to each of the five possible ratings for each item.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	
					1.
					2.
					3.
					4.
					5.
					6.
					7.
					8.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	
					9.
					10.
					11.
					12.
					13.
					14.
					15.
					16.

APPENDIX F

STAFF DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION FORM

SD-26A

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION OF THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Instructions

Each participant in this staff development activity should evaluate the the activity by checking whether he/she Strongly Agrees, is Undecided, Disagrees, or Strongly Disagrees with each of the statements below. (The director of the activity should summarize for the group and record the results in Section H of the Evaluation Report Form SD-26.)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Materials, supplies, and equipment were ready at the beginning of the training activity.					
2. Participants were introduced to the specific learning objectives and materials of the workshop/ seminar.					
3. The content of the workshop reflected careful planning and organization.					
4. The presenter(s) (were) well prepared.					
5. The presenter(s) provided for a variety of learning styles.					
6. The presenter(s) modeled effective time use.					
7. The sessions were conducted at a brisk pace.					
8. The experiences of participants were utilized as a resource for learning.					
9. Provisions were made to actively involve participants in the learning process.					
10. Adequate time was allowed for participants to reflect on and relate workshop material and content to their experiences and needs.					
11. Questions and concerns were handled appropriately.					
12. Participants were provided with periodic feedback and encouragement.					
13. Visual aids and handouts were useful and understandable.					
14. Adequate provisions were made for participant comfort.					
15. Administrative and procedural concerns were handled smoothly and efficiently.					
16. Overall, this workshop/seminar was a successful training experience for me.					

APPENDIX G

WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY FORM

Post-Practicum Writing Attitude Survey

DIRECTIONS: Respond to the following statements by placing a check in the column that describes your feelings.

	Positive Responses			Negative Responses		
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Positive %	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Negative %
1. Writing is a difficult part of school work.						
2. Writing is important in my future work.						
3. I like to write.						
4. It is a waste of my time to write.						
5. Using the steps of writing has helped to improve my paragraphs and essays.						
6. My grades in other subjects will improve as my writing improves.						
7. I like to write in my free time.						
8. I know how to write well.						
9. Now that my writing is better, I like writing.						
10. I like to write in my personal journal.						

COMMENTS ABOUT WRITING

_____

_____

APPENDIX H

TEACHER PERFORMANCE
APPRAISAL INSTRUMENT

NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

116 West Edenton Street • Education Building
Raleigh • 27603-1712

August 26, 1988

Ms. Ann P. Elks
Bladen County Board of Education
P.O. Box 37
King & Courthouse Road
Elizabethtown, N. C. 28337

Dear Ms. Elks:

You have requested authorization to use and reproduce a copy of the North Carolina Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument, as an appendix to your dissertation. I am especially pleased to grant such permission, first because the instrument is not protected in copyright and record second because we at the Department are please to be subject of the professional scrutiny of our colleagues.

Please let me know if I can be of additional assistance.

Cordially,

David Holdzkom

David Holdzkom, Director
Division of Personnel Relations

DH/ad

an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer

NORTH

1/85

TEACHER PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Based on the evidence from observation and discussion, the evaluator is to rate the teacher's performance with respect to the 8 major functions of teaching listed below.
2. The evaluator is encouraged to add pertinent comments at the end of each major function.
3. The teacher is provided an opportunity to react to the evaluator's ratings and comments
4. The evaluator and the teacher must discuss the results of the appraisal and any recommended action pertinent to it.
5. The teacher and the evaluator must sign the instrument in the assigned spaces.
6. The instrument must be filed in the teacher's personnel folder.
7. The rating scale will be as follows:

Level of Performance

6. Superior
Performance within this function area is consistently outstanding. Teaching practices are demonstrated at the highest level of performance. Teacher continuously seeks to expand scope of competencies and constantly undertakes additional, appropriate responsibilities.

5. Well Above Standard
Performance within this function area is frequently outstanding. Some teaching practices are demonstrated at the highest level while others are at a consistently high level. Teacher frequently seeks to expand scope of competencies and often undertakes additional, appropriate responsibilities.

4. Above Standard
Performance within this function area is frequently high. Some teaching practices are demonstrated at a high level while others are at a consistently adequate/acceptable level. Teacher sometimes seeks to expand scope of competencies and occasionally undertakes additional, appropriate responsibilities.

3. At Standard
Performance within this function area is consistently adequate/acceptable. Teaching practices fully meet all performance expectations at an acceptable level. Teacher maintains an adequate scope of competencies and performs additional responsibilities as assigned.

2. Below Standard
Performance within this function area is sometimes inadequate/unacceptable and needs improvement. Teacher requires supervision and assistance to maintain an adequate scope of competencies, and sometimes fails to perform additional responsibilities as assigned.

1. Unsatisfactory
Performance within this function area is consistently inadequate/unacceptable and most practices require considerable improvement to fully meet minimum performance expectations. Teacher requires close and frequent supervision in the performance of all responsibilities.

Rating Scale
(Please Check)

Superior	Well Above Standard	Above Standard	At Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory

Teacher Name _____

School _____

1. Major Function: Management of Instructional Time ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

   1.1 Teacher has materials, supplies and equipment ready at the start of the lesson or instructional activity.

   1.2 Teacher gets the class started quickly.

   1.3 Teacher gets students on task quickly at the beginning of each lesson or instructional activity.

   1.4 Teacher maintains a high level of student time-on-task.

   Comments _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Major Function: Management of Student Behavior ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

   2.1 Teacher has established a set of rules and procedures that govern the handling of routine administrative matters.

   2.2 Teacher has established a set of rules and procedures that govern student verbal participation and talk during different types of activities--whole-class instruction, small group instruction, etc.

   2.3 Teacher has established a set of rules and procedures that govern student movement in the classroom during different types of instructional activities.

   2.4 Teacher frequently monitors the behavior of all students during whole-class, small group, and seat work activities and during transitions between instructional activities.

	Rating Scale (Please Check)					
	Superior	Well Above Standard	Above Standard	At Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory
2.5 Teacher stops inappropriate behavior promptly and consistently, yet maintains the dignity of the student.						

Comments_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Major Function: Instructional Presentation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.1 Teacher begins lesson or instructional activity with a review of previous material.						
3.2 Teacher introduces the lesson or instructional activity and specifies learning objectives when appropriate.						
3.3 Teacher speaks fluently and precisely.						
3.4 Teacher presents the lesson or instructional activity using concepts and language understandable to the students.						
3.5 Teacher provides relevant examples and demonstrations to illustrate concepts and skills.						
3.6 Teacher assigns tasks that students handle with a high rate of success.						
3.7 Teacher asks appropriate levels of questions that students handle with a high rate of success.						
3.8 Teacher conducts lesson or instructional activity at a brisk pace, slowing presentations when necessary for student understanding but avoiding unnecessary slowdowns.						
3.9 Teacher makes transitions between lessons and between instructional activities within lessons efficiently and smoothly.						

Rating Scale
(Please Check)

Superior	Well Above Standard	Above Standard	At Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory

3.10 Teacher makes sure that the assignment is clear. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

3.11 Teacher summarizes the main point(s) of the lesson at the end of the lesson or instructional activity. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Comments _____

_____

_____

_____

4. Major Function: Instructional Monitoring of Student Performance ☐☐☐☐☐☐

4.1 Teacher maintains clear, firm and reasonable work standards and due dates. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

4.2 Teacher circulates during classwork to check all students' performance. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

4.3 Teacher routinely uses oral, written, and other work products to check student progress. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

4.4 Teacher poses questions clearly and one at a time. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Comments _____

_____

_____

_____

5. Major Function: Instructional Feedback ☐☐☐☐☐☐

5.1 Teacher provides feedback on the correctness or incorrectness of in-class work to encourage student growth. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Rating Scale
(Please Check)

Superior	Well Above Standard	Above Standard	At Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory

5.2 Teacher regularly provides prompt feedback on assigned out-of-class work.

5.3 Teacher affirms a correct oral response appropriately, and moves on.

5.4 Teacher provides sustaining feedback after an incorrect response or no response by probing, repeating the question, giving a clue, or allowing more time.

Comments _____

_____

_____

_____

6. Major Function: Facilitating Instruction ☐☐☐☐☐☐

6.1 Teacher has an instructional plan which is compatible with the school and system-wide curricular goals.

6.2 Teacher uses diagnostic information obtained from tests and other assessment procedures to develop and revise objectives and/or tasks.

6.3 Teacher maintains accurate records to document student performance.

6.4 Teacher has instructional plan that matches/aligns objectives, learning strategies, assessment and student needs at the appropriate level of difficulty.

6.5 Teacher uses available human and material resources to support the instructional program.

Rating Scale
(Please Check)

Superior	Well Above Standard	Above Standard	At Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory

Comments_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Major Function: Communicating Within The Educational Environment

☐☐☐☐☐☐

7.1 Teacher treats all students in a fair and equitable manner.

7.2 Teacher interacts effectively with students, co-workers, parents, and community.

Comments_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Major Function: Performing Non-Instructional Duties

☐☐☐☐☐☐

8.1 Teacher carries out non-instructional duties as assigned and/or as need is perceived.

8.2 Teacher adheres to established laws, policies, rules, and regulations.

8.3 Teacher follows a plan for professional development and demonstrates evidence of growth.

Comments_____

_____

_____

_____

Evaluator's Summary Comments_____

_____

_____

_____

Teacher's Reactions to Evaluation_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ _____

Evaluator's signature and date Teacher's signature and date

Signature indicates that the written evaluation has been seen and discussed.

APPENDIX I

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION
LOCAL NEWSPAPER

Building a future for County

Writing Assessment to be administered

Annual Writing Assessment will be administered to students at sixth and

Parents can help their children be better prepared for this important date by:

-Being positive about the test experience and writing in general as an important means of communication and expression.

-Making sure their child has a good night's rest and a nutritious breakfast.

-Being sure that the child rises early enough to arrive at school on time and with an appropriate attitude about the school day.

The writing assessment is designed to measure ability to express ideas in writing clearly and concisely. It is also intended to measure the students' command of grammar, spelling, as well as the conventions of punctuation and capitalization. The writing test samples will be scored on a scale from one to four with four being the optimum score.

Students will be given a "prompt" to which they will be required to respond. Sixth graders will write either descriptive or clarification essays. Eighth graders will have prompts that require either persuasive or point-of-view compositions. The writing "prompts" will not be known to the teachers or students until Tuesday morning at test time.

director of Guidance and Testing, is responsible for the security and coordination of the writing assessment as well as all components of the annual testing program.

Students in the school system are expected to show improved writing abilities this year. Teachers have worked hard in their classrooms and after-school workshops to assure achievement. Regional Research Director and Communications Skills Consultants and have conducted a series of staff development activities to plan instructional strategies and help teachers improve their evaluation skills. Selected teachers at grades five and seven have also participated in order to begin building writing skills a year prior to assessment. Because of this, it is expected there will be a growth this year and even more improvement next year. Teachers have conducted test simulations using the exact procedures of the actual test administration and using an identical format.

Teachers in other curriculum areas such as social studies and science classes have joined the teachers of language arts in the effort to help students improve writing achievement. According to Associate Superintendent "Because of the reciprocal nature of the communication skills and their integration into every discipline, every teacher in Bladen County is a teacher of writing."

Written expression carries over into every other subject in the curriculum. The student who cannot write a coherent paragraph or a well organized essay will be functioning without necessary skills in a science of history class. Writing is basic to all academic areas and to the economic and social world. Students without the ability to express themselves are handicapped in the realm of higher education as well as in the world of work. Therefore, the educators of County have united in extending this effort to improve area students writing ability this year and in future years.

APPENDIX J

TECHNICAL BRIEF: PROJECT WR.I.T.&E.

GLASSBORO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Project WR.I.T. & E.

NORTH DELSEA DRIVE
GLASSBORO, NEW JERSEY 08028

WALTER J. VAIL
PROJECT WR.I.T.& E. DIRECTOR

PATRICIA A. RUBIN
PROJECT WR.I.T.& E. COORDINATOR

PHONE 609-881-2290

August 23, 1988

Ms. Ann Elks
Bladen County Schools
P.O. Box 37
Elizabethtown, North Carolina 28337

Dear Ms. Elks:

I'm enclosing the Project WR.I.T.&E. Evalutation 1981-83, which is the official evaluation, as accepted by the Joint Dissemination Review Panel (JDRP) of the National Diffusion Network (NDN).

I have also enclosed Technical Brief #4, which adds data for years of implementation and adoption from 1983-84 to 1986-87. I can vouch for the accuracy of the figures, but I must tell you that some of the probability figures are estimates. Deadlines for reporting data did not always allow us the time to go to a statistician. However, it is clear that any gain above .30 on a six-point scale is a significant gain.

We are currently waiting for an analysis of a large study done in 1986-87, which will be completed by a statistician.

Meanwhile, we are happy to give you permission to use any of this information in your dissertation. Thanks for your inquiry, and best wishes with your academic work.

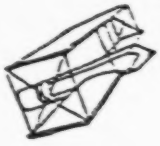
Sincerely,

Walter J. Vail

Walter J. Vail
Project WR.I.T.&E. Director

jw
Enclosures

November, 1984



WR.I.T.&E.
Public Schools

Project Director

Project Coordinator

Technical Brief #1

Project Description

Project WR.I.T.&E. is a K-12 writing program designed to improve students' writing competency and fluency in composing by using a process approach to writing that is developmentally tailored to students' needs. The student activities component of the curriculum features teacher modeling, journal writing, teaching the language literacy skills as a part of the writing process, and a Young Authors' Conference. The staff development component of the curriculum provides experiences for the Teacher as a Writer, Teacher as a Researcher and Teacher as an Educator. In the Primary through Middle School grade, Project activities replace the traditional language arts curriculum. In high school English classes, language skills are integrated with writing activities while in other subject matter areas Project activities are infused into the ongoing program.

Seven general themes form the basic pattern of student activities, with grade level variations for the developmental stages of students. They are:

1. Climate: The teacher establishes a supportive climate by modeling writing behavior. He or she writes for and with the students and shares his or her writing with them. As another writer, the teacher perfects writing using a writing process and communicates through writing. Students learn to write, share, and respond to writing and to work cooperatively and supportively as partners, in small and large groups. This facilitates substantial oral and written interaction.

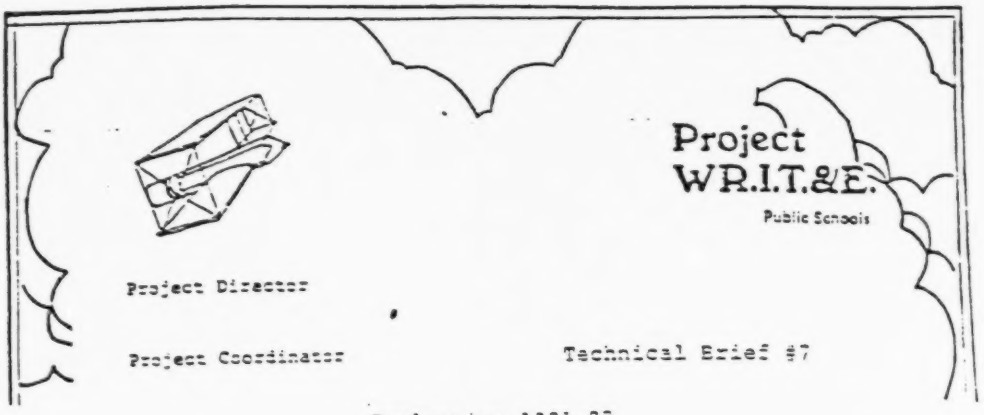
2. Fluency: Journal-writing is the primary activity for developing fluency at all grade levels, although "free-writing" is also used. The teacher keeps and shares her or his journal and students fill journals with expressive writing, which become records of fluency and storebooks of ideas.

Students write what they have to say in journals 10-10 minutes per day. Some journals are dedicated to subject areas, particularly in grades 3-12, and are used to record ideas and learning. Journal writing becomes the basis of the writing process. It is the pre-writing phase, from which pieces of writing are chosen for further processing and for development and possible publication. Journals are examined by teachers but never graded, since they do not represent final products.

3. Audience: Students concept of audience moves outward from self to peers, then to trusted others, and finally to the "unknown", as children become less egocentric and more aware of others. Teachers identify audiences for each processed piece of writing. There is never any writing without an audience. In addition to the more readily available self, peers and parents, audiences can be other classes and grade levels, adults, community leaders, businesses, celebrities, and governmental figures. Publication includes classroom and school materials, bulletin boards, homemade books, and commercial magazines. Each year Project WR.I.T.&E. offers children the excitement of sharing writing with a real audience by participating in a Young Authors Conference. A culmination of a year's worth of composing, the conference serves as a showcase for student products that have been carefully crafted, and allows them to share the joy of writing with adults and peers.

4. Writing Process: Students are taught to pre-write, to compose, to revise, and finally to edit using a modeling process provided by the teacher. Students have writing at all steps of the process and student-teacher conferences occur repeatedly during the process. Students are taught to listen and respond by using the "sayback" technique, which is followed by revision. Students are in complete control of their writing although the teacher demands a final product. Students are taught to use a flow chart of their writing process and proceed at their own pace. In a given class, one student may be writing expressively in his or her journal while another may be polishing a final draft for publication. Students always have a piece of writing in progress, although some students may take several weeks on a piece, others may process a piece in several days.

5. Writing as Learning: Teachers at all levels use the writing process as a tool for learning subject matter. Journals are kept on dedicated topics and discussion is often preceded by a brief journal entry on a topic. Essay assignments on study topics are processed through prewriting, composing, revising and editing stages. Audiences other than teacher are provided and pieces are published. Sharing and group feedback are used at each step, and teacher-learner conferences are used for evaluation. Final products are often given a grade for the learning they represent.



Evaluation 1981-83

The Project's claim of effectiveness that students receiving instruction with the Project's curriculum significantly outperformed ($p < .01$) comparable control students in writing ability as measured by holistic writing assessment procedures was supported by three experimental studies involving students in grades 3,4,5,7, and 11. In the first study--a one year assessment of program effects--three grade levels were involved in the investigation of student impact. In the second study--and assessment of two year effects--two grade levels participated in the investigation. In the third study--two-year versus one year effects--the third grade group who participated in the assessment of one-year effects were examined for a second school year but with both treatment and control groups receiving Project materials during the second year.

In all experimental studies, ANCOVA results favor treatment groups in all five analysis, four at alpha .01 and one at alpha .02. Furthermore, the gains of treatment groups were not at the expense in achievement of the traditional language literacy skills. Growth in these skills was comparable for both treatment and control groups during the period of intervention.

TABLE 1
WRITING SAMPLE SCORES
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, PRE TO POST CHANGE AND TEST
OF SIGNIFICANCE OF MEAN DIFFERENCES
ALL STUDY GROUPS

		Pretest		Posttest		Change		t		Two-tailed
	N	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Raw	SD Units	value	df	Probability
TREATMENT										
ONE YEAR EFFECTS										
3rd Grade	18	1.83	1.06	3.22	.71	1.39	1.31	7.57	17	<.001
7th Grade	13	2.38	1.05	4.82	1.30	2.46	2.34	9.59	17	<.001
11th Grade	10	4.30	1.34	5.20	.79	.90	.67	3.25	9	<.01
TWO YEARS' EFFECTS										
4-5 Grades	17	2.24	1.20	4.82	1.07	2.59	1.99	8.05	16	<.001
ONE YEAR vs TWO YEARS' EFFECTS										
3-4 Grades	15	1.73	.70	4.60	1.45	2.87	4.10	7.15	14	<.001

1983-84

For the year 1983-84 the following data has been collected and analyzed. Statistically significant progress was made in each of the third grade classes with five different teachers implementing Project WR.I.T.&E. At the eighth grade level the mean evaluation gain was statistically significant. Although girls at both grade levels tended to score higher than boys, both boys and girls made equally significant gains.

1983-84
THIRD GRADE
T-TEST EVALUATION OF PRE-POST MEAN DIFFERENCE
WRITING SAMPLE

Group	N	Pretest Mean	Pretest S.D.	Posttest Mean	Posttest S.D.	Change Raw	Change SD Units	t value	df	Two-tailed Probability
All Classrooms	113	3.05	1.34	4.54	1.31	1.49	1.11	10.84	112	<.0001
Classroom A	18	3.06	1.11	4.33	1.08	1.28	1.15	3.86	17	<.0006
Classroom B	21	3.00	1.55	4.81	1.29	1.81	1.17	5.28	20	<.0001
Classroom C	27	3.44	1.05	4.74	1.29	1.30	1.24	5.46	26	<.0001
Classroom D	24	2.38	1.06	3.83	1.40	1.46	1.38	6.06	23	<.0001
Classroom E	23	3.35	1.67	4.96	1.19	1.61	.96	4.06	22	<.0003
Girls	59	3.10	1.39	4.59	1.25	1.49	1.07	8.69	58	<.0001
Boys	54	3.00	1.29	4.48	1.33	1.48	1.15	6.76	53	<.0001

1983-84 SCHOOL YEAR
EIGHTH GRADE
T-TEST EVALUATION OF PRE-POST MEAN DIFFERENCE
WRITING SAMPLE

Group	N	Pretest Mean	Pretest S.D.	Posttest Mean	Posttest S.D.	Change Raw	Change SD Units	t value	df	Two-tailed Probability
All Students	135	3.57	1.23	4.64	1.20	1.07	.87	11.40	134	<.0001
Girls	72	3.74	1.31	4.82	1.15	1.08	.82	7.54	71	<.0001
Boys	63	3.38	1.11	4.43	1.23	1.05	.95	9.00	62	<.0001

A complete description of this holistic evaluation of pre-and-post writing samples is available from the Project Office on request.

1984-85

Project WR.I.T.&E. was successfully implemented in Glassboro in 1984-85. Each of the five grade levels tested include 95% of the student population at that grade level. Each grade level showed statistically significant pretest to posttest mean score gains. Each was significant at the .0001 level. Only two classrooms (at the sixth grade level) were at less than the .01 level of probability.

1984-85 SCHOOL YEAR
GLASSBORO SCHOOLS ALL GRADE LEVELS
T-TEST EVALUATION OF PRE-POST MEAN DIFFERENCE
WRITING SAMPLE

		Pretest		Posttest		Change		t		Two-tailed
Group	N	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Raw	SD Units	value	df	Probability
Grade 3 All	126	2.76	1.21	3.83	1.21	1.06	.88	11.87	125	<.0001
Classroom A	20	2.40	.94	3.95	1.28	1.55	1.65	6.60	19	<.0001
Classroom B	21	3.71	1.27	4.68	1.20	.95	.75	5.42	20	<.0001
Classroom C	18	1.61	.61	3.06	1.00	1.44	2.36	7.82	17	<.0001
Classroom D	20	2.40	.75	3.70	1.03	1.30	1.73	6.73	21	<.0001
Classroom E	22	2.68	.89	3.27	.83	.59	.66	3.25	21	<.002
Classroom F	25	3.44	1.29	4.16	1.24	.72	.56	2.90	24	<.004
Grade 6 All	118	3.50	1.29	4.20	1.14	.70	.54	7.40	117	<.0001
Classroom A	23	2.43	1.08	3.39	1.08	.96	.89	5.23	22	<.0001
Classroom B	23	3.30	1.11	4.17	.98	.87	.78	3.65	22	<.0007
Classroom C	27	4.63	1.28	5.04	1.09	.41	.85	1.84	26	<.039
Classroom D	22	3.55	.80	4.45	.91	.91	1.14	4.63	21	<.0001
Classroom E	23	3.39	1.08	3.83	.89	.43	.40	2.21	22	<.019
Grade 8 All	140	3.40	1.16	4.12	1.04	.72	.62	9.86	139	<.0001
Grade 9 All	152	3.54	1.17	4.31	1.16	.77	.66	8.82	151	<.0001
Grade 10 All	132	3.48	.89	4.04	1.04	.55	.62	7.91	131	<.0001

Rating Scale: 1-6 Pretest: September, 1984; Posttest May, 1985.

1984-1985 SCHOOL YEAR
SUMMARIES OF IMPACT EVALUATION DATA
T-TEST EVALUATION OF PRE-POST MEAN DIFFERENCE
WRITING SAMPLE

School District	Group	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Raw Change	T-Test Probability
Glassboro New Jersey	Gr. 3	126	2.76	3.83	1.06	<.0001
	Gr. 6	118	3.50	4.20	.70	<.0001
	Gr. 8	140	3.40	4.12	.72	<.0001
	Gr. 9	152	3.54	4.31	.77	<.0001
	Gr. 10	132	3.48	4.04	.55	<.0001
Cleary Middle School, Buena, NJ	Gr. 8	151	2.17	3.62	1.45	<.0001
Barnegat New Jersey	Gr. 3	88	2.73	4.50	1.77	<.0001
Roxbury Township Schools New Jersey	Gr. 9	100	2.88	3.47	.59	<.0001
Harding Township Schools New Jersey	Gr. 2	26	2.58	3.73	1.15	<.0001
	Gr. 7	27	3.44	3.74	.30	<.05

APPENDIX K

ANNUAL TESTING PROGRAM
WRITING ASSESSMENT
SUMMARY REPORT
1987-88

ANNUAL TESTING PROGRAM BASIC SKILLS

SUMMARY REPORT

The Annual Testing Program
Writing Assessment 1987-1988

SCHOOL SYSTEM: COUNTY

	NUMBER TESTED	FOCUSED HOLISTIC SCORE POINTS 4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	NS	CONVENTION SCORES ++	+-	--
		PERCENTAGES								PERCENTAGES		
STATE												
Total:	81,047	8.2	9.3	33.6	15.0	27.6	2.8	3.2	0.2	79.9	13.6	6.4
Handicapped:	5,789	0.6	1.3	9.7	10.2	41.9	11.7	23.7	0.9	34.4	28.2	37.4
Non-Handicapped:	73,454	8.9	9.9	35.4	15.4	26.5	2.1	1.6	0.1	83.6	12.4	4.0
REGION 4-SOUTH CENTRAL												
Total:	10,323	5.2	6.2	32.2	15.5	32.9	3.5	4.3	0.2	76.3	16.2	7.5
Handicapped:	728	0.4	0.7	8.0	7.6	38.3	12.8	31.2	1.1	30.1	27.3	42.6
Non-Handicapped:	9,468	5.6	6.6	34.3	16.1	32.2	2.8	2.3	0.1	79.8	15.4	4.8
COUNTY												
Total:	460	9.3	9.3	33.7	13.5	25.4	4.1	4.6	0.0	62.2	28.3	9.6
Handicapped:	54	0.0	0.0	11.1	9.3	31.5	20.4	27.8	0.0	25.9	37.0	37.0
Non-Handicapped:	406	10.6	10.6	36.7	14.0	24.6	2.0	1.5	0.0	67.0	27.1	5.9
School A * Total:	145	14.5	9.7	38.6	10.3	17.2	2.8	6.9	0.0	56.6	32.4	11.0
Handicapped:	19	0.0	0.0	15.8	0.0	21.1	15.8	47.4	0.0	15.8	42.1	42.1
Non-Handicapped:	126	16.7	11.1	42.1	11.9	16.7	0.8	0.8	0.0	62.7	31.0	6.3
B Total:	74	6.8	9.5	32.4	14.9	27.0	6.8	2.7	0.0	58.1	37.8	4.1
Handicapped:	15	0.0	0.0	6.7	6.7	53.3	26.7	6.7	0.0	53.3	33.3	13.3
Non-Handicapped:	59	8.5	11.9	39.0	16.9	20.3	1.7	1.7	0.0	59.3	39.0	1.7
C Total:	35	14.3	8.6	11.4	34.3	28.6	2.9	0.0	0.0	82.9	11.4	5.7
Handicapped:	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	66.7
Non-Handicapped:	32	15.6	9.4	12.5	31.3	31.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	87.5	12.5	0.0
D Total:	22	0.0	13.6	31.8	27.3	13.6	0.0	13.6	0.0	45.5	31.8	22.7
Handicapped:	3	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7
Non-Handicapped:	19	0.0	15.8	31.6	31.6	15.8	0.0	5.3	0.0	52.6	31.6	15.8
E Total:	120	5.0	9.2	33.3	9.2	35.8	5.8	1.7	0.0	67.5	19.2	13.3
Handicapped:	8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	25.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	75.0
Non-Handicapped:	112	5.4	9.8	35.7	9.8	34.8	4.5	0.0	0.0	72.3	18.8	8.9
F Total:	64	9.4	7.8	37.5	10.9	25.0	3.1	6.3	0.0	64.1	32.8	3.1
Handicapped:	6	0.0	0.0	16.7	33.3	16.7	16.7	16.7	0.0	33.3	66.7	0.0
Non-Handicapped:	58	10.3	8.6	39.7	8.6	25.9	1.7	5.2	0.0	67.2	29.3	3.4

* Target School

APPENDIX L

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE: "GOOD THINGS"

Good Things Have Happened In Schools

During Past Year

By

Annual Writing Scores At Grades Six And Eight Up

Good things have been happening in Schools during the past year.

According to test results, the writing scores in grades six and eight here in are much improved, with the eighth graders surpassing regional scores.

This is mainly the result of two things: (1) The supervisor worked with Region IV educational coordinators to design special workshops that were then held locally to train teachers how to teach writing skills, and (2) the hard work of teachers in grades four through eight as they returned to the classrooms to apply the newly learned techniques.

Health Education Begins Three New Programs

Three new health policies are being submitted to the Board of Education for approval. They are Drug Alcohol Use, Tobacco Use policy and the Infection Control -- Employee and Student Safety policy with emphasis on AIDS.

interaction between students across states, their teachers and their classmates.

For instance, this nationwide classroom enables a student in North Carolina to ask a question that is heard by a classmate in New Mexico and by a teacher in Texas. The responding teacher can be heard by both students.

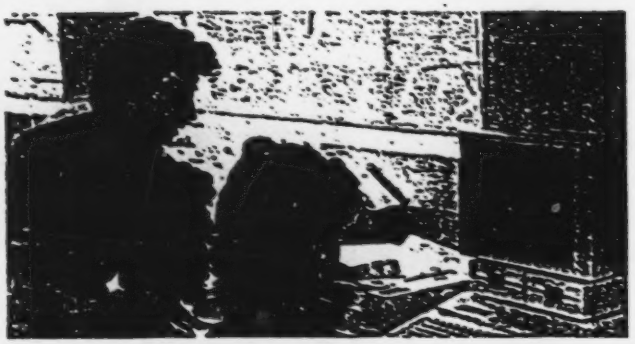
This new system will also be used for professional development for teachers, administrators and staff.

APPENDIX M

EXCERPT FROM VOL. V. NO. 3
SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL CENTER
"SPOTLIGHT"

Spotlight On County

Writing Emphasis Results In Improved Performance



language arts teacher at Elementary, shares telecommunications data with two elementary students.

, Associate Superintendent, Instruction, declared 1987-88 the "Year of Writing" in Schools. Students in were scoring below the regional average on the Annual Writing Assessment.

Since writing permeates every subject and affects performance across the curriculum, the deficit in writing among students had to be addressed. Teachers of social studies, science, health and every curriculum area were challenged to become teachers of writing. Training sessions were coordinated by Region IV Research and Communications Skills Personnel. The holistic scoring process was explicated and instructional strategies collaboratively developed. Test simulations were conducted using exact procedures and identical state format.

In addition, three County schools: elementary, Middle School, and are participating in a telecommunications network project designed to motivate writing improvement.

These schools form one of seven sites or "NODES" within the state, becoming a part of a CMS or Computer Mail Service Network. The network connects with six other nodes within the state. Telephone communications conducted via modem connect students with pen pals and student writers at other sites.

Besides learning the technical skills of computer operation — computer literacy — the project is increasing writing fluency, improving editing and critical reading skills. Students are writing with a sense of audience and evaluating their writing in each stage of the writing process as well as the writing of their peers. From the information uploaded and filed onto a bulletin board, a joint publication, a literary magazine, is planned with contributions from students at each site.

Another stimulus for writing, as well as art and drama activities, has been the Reading Initiative Program. School is the Region IV pilot site for a program sponsored jointly by The publisher has supplied each teacher in this school with 125 trade books for the establishment of classroom libraries. According to numerous research studies, students with access to good reading materials have better attitudes toward reading, read more, and score higher on achievement tests. Each teacher selected books for her classroom based on student needs and interest. consultants held training sessions for teachers and gave suggestions for choosing and using the books. In addition to using the books for group and independent reading, teachers and students are enjoying them as the basis for integrating all the subject areas around the themes and motifs within the collections.

Results of this concerted effort to improve writing skills of students in are now available. The instrument used to evaluate the students program was the .Vriting Assessment which is administered to students in grades 6 and 8. This test, in use since 1982, requires sixth grade students to write either a clarification or descriptive essay while eighth grade students write in either the persuasive or point-of-view mode. Each paper is assigned a score between 1.0 (low) and 4.0 (highest) according to holistic scoring rules.

Although scoring below the Region IV average on the 1986-87 Writing Assessment test, County sixth graders equaled the Region IV average in 1987-88 with 39.9% of the students scoring at the 2.5 level or above. However, the greatest improvement in writing was at County's eighth grade level. By 1987-88, eighth graders were scoring above the Region IV average with 65.8% of the students attaining scores of 2.5 and above.

Special emphasis can produce excellent dividends. We salute the efforts of all those students, teachers, administrators and parents who worked so diligently to make the "Year of Writing" a success in County. May your achievements motivate you to even greater accomplishments.